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Capital One

2025

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2025 WORLD SERIES OFFICIAL PROGRAM

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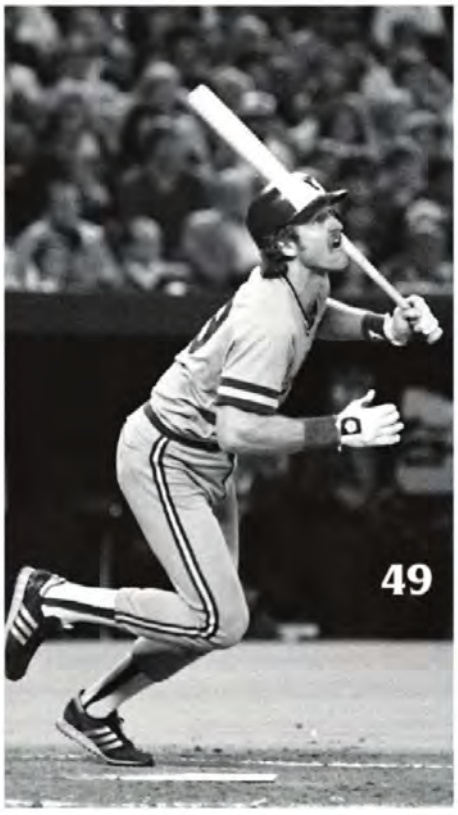

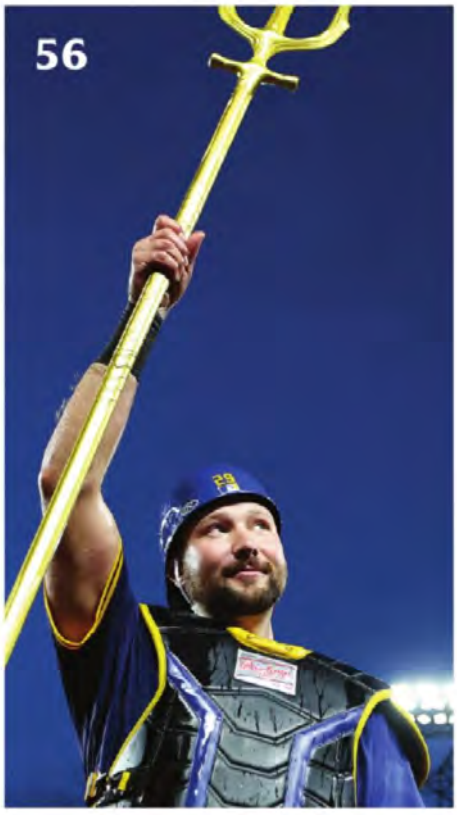

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Chevrolet Earned More Dependability Awards for Trucks Than Any Other Brand* — J.D. Power, 2025

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*Chevrolet received the highest total number of awards among all trucks in the J.D. Power 2025 U.S. Vehicle Dependability Study. Awards based on 2022 models; newer models may be shown. Visit jdpower.com/awards for more details. Major League Baseball trademarks and copyrights are used with permission of Major League Baseball. Visit MLB.com.

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Office of the Commissioner
MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

ROBERT D. MANFRED, JR.
Commissioner of Baseball

Dear Fans:

On behalf of Major League Baseball, I am thrilled to welcome you to the 2025 World Series presented by Capital One. Following a memorable regular season and an exciting start to the Postseason, our 121st Fall Classic is now poised to crown one championship team that will become a part of baseball history.

This amazing 2025 season has been a vibrant reflection of Major League Baseball today. We opened our calendar in Tokyo, where the Los Angeles Dodgers and Chicago Cubs reminded us that our sport is fortunate to span the globe. Our All-Star Game in Atlanta celebrated the world's best players in first-class fashion, made a meaningful impact on the Braves' local communities, and honored the enduring legacy of a true pillar of our National Pastime, the late Hank Aaron.

Once again, our talented players have proven that the game is crisper, more athletic, and more entertaining for our fans, who have responded in kind. For the third straight year, more than 70 million fans attended regular-season games. We are also strengthening baseball's future. Through PLAY BALL and our other thriving youth participation programs, we are reaching the next generation of baseball and softball players, coaches, fans and families.

The World Series represents the dream for all those who care about a team and for everyone who puts on a baseball uniform. In pursuit of that goal, our players are setting a strong example of dedication, teamwork and resilience for the millions of young fans who are learning our game.

We cannot wait to begin one of the most special traditions in sports, knowing that it will be enjoyed by fans across the world. All of us at Major League Baseball appreciate your loyalty to our great game, and we hope that you enjoy the 2025 World Series.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Manfred Jr.

Robert D. Manfred, Jr.
Commissioner of Baseball

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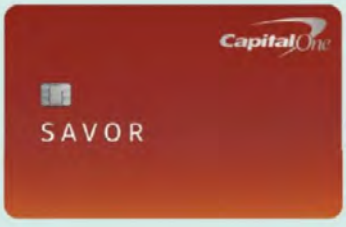

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ROBERT D. MANFRED, JR.
Commissioner of Baseball

Robert D. Manfred, Jr. was elected as the 10th Commissioner in the history of Major League Baseball on August 14, 2014, by a vote of the 30 Clubs. He officially became the sport's leader on January 25, 2015. Manfred is now in his third term as Commissioner, which will conclude following the 2028 season.

As Commissioner, Manfred has led MLB to two labor agreements that have preserved full seasons, extending the game's streak of uninterrupted regular-season play since his oversight of the league's labor relations began more than 25 years ago. In 2023, Manfred guided MLB's revolutionary on-field rule changes, which resulted in the sport's best time of game since 1985, its most stolen bases since 1987, a 9.6% increase in league-wide attendance, and widespread praise across the sports and media industries. In 2015, MLB launched Manfred's signature PLAY BALL youth engagement program, which has spurred meaningful increases in baseball and softball participation. In the program's first five years, casual participation in baseball increased by nearly 90% (per the SFIA). Manfred has prioritized the game's growth by staging an increased number of special events both domestically and internationally. MLB has taken meaningful games to Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Japan, Mexico, Puerto Rico, South Korea and the United Kingdom, which marked baseball's first series ever in Europe. Manfred has championed special events in unique U.S. locations, including at legendary Negro Leagues ballpark Rickwood Field, the Field of Dreams, Bristol Motor Speedway, the NCAA's Men's College World Series, and Fort Bragg (now Fort Liberty). These marked the first MLB games ever played in Alabama, Iowa, Tennessee, Nebraska and North Carolina. In 2020, Manfred began the process of bringing the statistics of Negro Leagues players into MLB's official historical record, which was finalized in May 2024.

Manfred became MLB's Chief Operating Officer in 2013. Prior to that, he had served as Executive Vice President since 1998 and directed all collective bargaining issues, overseeing successful renewals of the Basic Agreement in 2002, 2006 and 2011, and the game's dramatically improved competitive balance. Before joining Major League Baseball, Manfred was a partner in the Washington, D.C., office of Morgan, Lewis & Bockius.

Manfred attended Le Moyne College in Syracuse, NY, and is a graduate of Cornell University and Harvard Law School. He and his wife, Colleen, have four adult children and seven grandchildren.

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Deputy Commissioner, Baseball Administration & Chief Legal Officer

NOAH GARDEN
Deputy Commissioner, Business & Media

LARA PITARO WISCH
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Chief Financial Officer

P
Phillies

TOP OF THE ORDER

KYLE SCHWARBER WAS MVP-CALIBER IN 2025, LEADING THE PHILLIES TO THE POSTSEASON FOR A FOURTH STRAIGHT YEAR

K-Y-L-E, EASY AS ...

1 2 3

Became the first player in Phillies history with 9 RBI in a game on 8/28 vs ATL.

Is the first player in MLB with consecutive months of 12+ HR and 29+ RBI (July/August) since Mark McGwire in July/August of 1999.

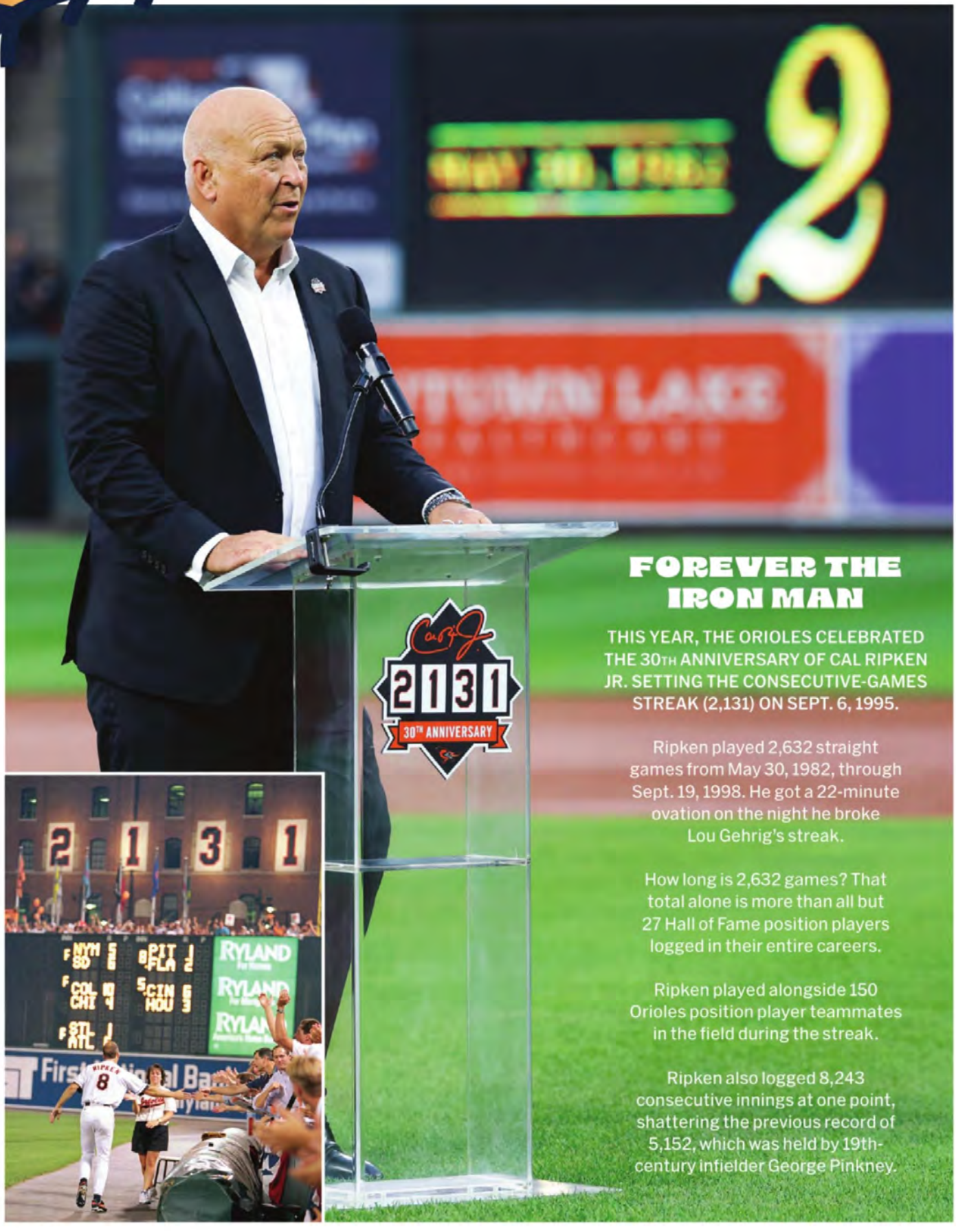
The second player in Phillies history to hit 50 HR in a single season, joining Ryan Howard (58 HR) in 2006.

Became the 2nd Phillie to win the All-Star Game MVP Award (Johnny Callison, 1964) after going 3-for-3 in the first-ever HR swing-off to give the NL the victory in Atlanta.

The third Phillies player to score 100+ runs in each of his first 4 (or more) seasons with the club (Sam Thompson, 1889-96/ Billy Hamilton, 1890-95).

Third All-Star selection (also, 2022 & 2021 w/ WAS).

DANIEL SHIREY/MLB PHOTOS



FOREVER THE IRON MAN

THIS YEAR, THE ORIOLES CELEBRATED THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF CAL RIPKEN JR. SETTING THE CONSECUTIVE-GAMES STREAK (2,131) ON SEPT. 6, 1995.

Ripken played 2,632 straight games from May 30, 1982, through Sept. 19, 1998. He got a 22-minute ovation on the night he broke Lou Gehrig's streak.

How long is 2,632 games? That total alone is more than all but 27 Hall of Fame position players logged in their entire careers.

Ripken played alongside 150 Orioles position player teammates in the field during the streak.

Ripken also logged 8,243 consecutive innings at one point, shattering the previous record of 5,152, which was held by 19th-century infielder George Pinkney.

ALYSSA HOWELL/MLB PHOTOS (CEREMONY); DOUG PENSINGER/GETTY IMAGES

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THE STUFF OF SKUBAL

JUNE 2017
Selected in the 29th round of the 2017 Draft by the Diamondbacks but does not sign.

JUNE 2018
Tigers select him in the ninth round of the 2018 Draft.

AUG. 18, 2020
Makes MLB debut.

AUG. 29, 2020
Earns his first career win.

JULY 2024
Makes his first AL All-Star team.

2024
He wins the pitching Triple Crown with 18 wins, a 2.39 ERA and 228 strikeouts.

EZRA SHAW/GETTY IMAGES

OCT. 1, 2024
Pitches six scoreless innings vs. Houston in first career postseason start in Game 1 of 2024 AL Wild Card Series.

NOV. 20, 2024
Wins the AL Cy Young.

MAY 25, 2025
Tosses first career complete game/shutout vs. Cleveland.

OCT. 10, 2025
Sets a winner-take-all game record with 13 Ks, including a postseason record seven in a row in game 5 of the ALDS.

2025
AL starting pitcher in All-Star Game.

KIDS BEING KIDS

THE ANNUAL LITTLE LEAGUE CLASSIC IN WILLIAMSPORT, PA., WAS, AS ALWAYS, A FUN AND SMASHING SUCCESS.

As the Mets ventured around the Little League complex in South Williamsport, Pa., on Aug. 17 ahead of the Little League Classic, Mark Vientos hesitated. Was he going to slide down the famous hill at Lamade Stadium?

Vientos had always wanted to as a kid, but he'd never gotten the chance. Still, he wasn't sure.

It took some cajoling from the horde of Little Leaguers surrounding him (and a few Mets staffers), but eventually, he did.

There was zero hesitation in Vientos' swing 10 hours later, when he stepped to the plate against Julio Rodríguez and the Mariners and launched a three-run homer to right field, igniting the Mets' offense en route to a 7-3 victory in the Classic. *—Paige Leckie*

Days later, a strong offensive showing and an unforgettable pitching performance led Tung-Yuan Little League to the 2025 Little League World Series title.

The club from Chinese Taipei took down Summerlin South Little League from Las Vegas, 7-0, on Aug. 24 in the championship game at Williamsport's Lamade Stadium.

Pitcher Lin Chin-Tse took a perfect game into the fifth inning of the six-inning game for Chinese Taipei, the first international Little League World Series champion since a team from Tokyo in 2017. It was Chinese Taipei's first LLWS title since 1996. A different squad representing Chinese Taipei lost the 2024 championship game to Lake Mary, Fla.

This year's Tung-Yuan team, though, was truly dominant. The club went 5-0 in the 2025 LLWS, beating Aruba, 1-0, in the international championship game to reach the final. It was the 18th Little League World Series championship for Chinese Taipei, the highest total of any non-U.S. team. *—Theo DeRosa*

JOE SARGENT/GETTY IMAGES (VIENTOS); DANIEL SHIREY/MLB PHOTOS

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RUNNING IT BACK

CAPTURING BACK-TO-BACK CHAMPIONSHIPS IS OBVIOUSLY NO EASY FEAT. JUST ASK THE 2024 RANGERS, WHO FELL SHORT OF THE PLAYOFFS ONE YEAR AFTER WINNING THE FIRST WORLD SERIES TITLE IN FRANCHISE HISTORY. AS SUCH, MLB HASN'T HAD A REPEAT CHAMPION FOR 24 CONSECUTIVE SEASONS.
HERE IS A LOOK AT THE ILLUSTRIOUS CLUBS THAT DID WIN AT LEAST TWO CHAMPIONSHIPS IN A ROW:

1998-2000
YANKEES
(three straight wins)
1998
vs. Padres, 4-0
1999
vs. Braves, 4-0
2000
vs. Mets, 4-1

1992-93
BLUE JAYS
1992
vs. Braves, 4-2
1993
vs. Phillies, 4-2

1977-78
YANKEES
1977
vs. Dodgers, 4-2
1978
vs. Dodgers, 4-2

1975-76
REDS
1975
vs. Red Sox, 4-3
1976
vs. Yankees, 4-0

1972-74
A'S
(three straight wins)
1972
vs. Reds, 4-3
1973
vs. Mets, 4-3
1974
vs. Dodgers, 4-1

1936-39
YANKEES
(four straight wins)
1936
vs. Giants, 4-2
1937
vs. Giants, 4-1
1938
vs. Cubs, 4-0
1939
vs. Reds, 4-0

1929-30
A'S
1929
vs. Cubs, 4-1
1930
vs. Cardinals, 4-2

1927-28
YANKEES
1927
vs. Pirates, 4-0
1928
vs. Cardinals, 4-0

1921-22
GIANTS
1921
vs. Yankees, 5-3
1922
vs. Yankees, 4-0-1

1915-16
RED SOX
1915
vs. Phillies, 4-1
1916
vs. Robins, 4-1

CAITLIN O'HARA/MLB PHOTOS

1961-62 YANKEES
1961
vs. Reds, 4-1
1962
vs. Giants, 4-3

1949-53 YANKEES
(five straight wins)
1949
vs. Dodgers, 4-1
1950
vs. Phillies, 4-0
1951
vs. Giants, 4-2
1952
vs. Dodgers, 4-3
1953
vs. Dodgers, 4-2

1910-11 A'S
1910
vs. Cubs, 4-1
1911
vs. Giants, 4-2

1907-08 CUBS
1907
vs. Tigers, 4-0-1
1908
vs. Tigers, 4-1

CHECK THAT

UPON FURTHER REVIEW, THE ABS CHALLENGE SYSTEM HAS BEEN CONFIRMED FOR THE 2026 MLB SEASON.

The Joint Competition Committee voted to bring the Automated Ball-Strike (ABS) Challenge System, powered by T-Mobile, to the big leagues following several years of experimentation in the Minor Leagues and use in Spring Training and the All-Star Game this year.

Considered a middle ground between so-called "robot umps" that could call every ball and strike and the long-standing tradition of the natural human error that comes with human umps, the ABS Challenge System gives teams the opportunity to request a quick review of some of the most important ball-strike calls in a given game.

With Hawk-Eye technology running in the background and monitoring the exact location of each pitch, relative to the batter's zone, players can request a challenge of a ball or strike call they feel the umpire got wrong.

When a call is challenged, the Hawk-Eye view is then transmitted over a 5G private network from T-Mobile's Advanced Network Solutions and nearly instantaneously shown to those in attendance via the videoboard and to home viewers via the broadcast. The ball-strike call is then either confirmed or overturned, and the game goes on having only been briefly interrupted.

Each team will start the game with two challenges. If a game goes into extra innings, any team that starts the extra inning out of challenges will get one challenge for the 10th inning. If they exhaust that challenge, they will then get another challenge for the 11th, and so on. If a team has challenges remaining at the start of the 10th inning, they will not get an additional challenge for that inning, though they will for any subsequent inning if they are out of challenges at the start of the inning. *—Anthony Castrovince*

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AWARDS TIME!

The MLB Awards presented by MGM Rewards returns to Las Vegas at The Chelsea at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas in November for one of baseball's biggest celebrations of the year. Baseball fans will not want to miss this celebration of the game's best players. Be there, live in person, as your favorite players accept their 2025 awards during a live MLB Network show. Go to https://www.mlb.com/events/mlb-awardsto to reserve your spot today!

WALK IT OFF

Capital One WALK-OFFS

Since establishing the Capital One Walk-Offs program in 2022, Capital One has donated over a million dollars to the Jackie Robinson Foundation in support of its programs. Capital One is proud to continue its partnership with the Jackie Robinson Foundation and support the Foundation's initiatives including its JRF Scholars program, which provides scholarship and leadership development opportunities to students as they pursue higher education.

AN INDEPENDENCE BASH IN PHILLY

ALL-STAR GAME PHILADELPHIA · 2026

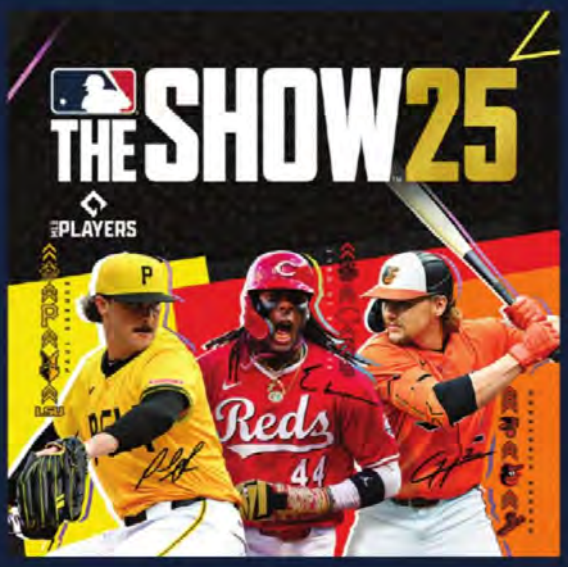
The All-Star Game is coming back to Philadelphia in 2026! Baseball's Midsummer Classic will be held at Citizens Bank Park, the home of the Phillies, for the celebration of the 250th anniversary of American independence and follows suit from 1976, when Veterans Stadium hosted the All-Star Game in the year of the nation's bicentennial. It will be the fifth time the city has hosted an All-Star Game. It most recently hosted at Veterans Stadium in 1996, making the 2026 edition the first to be held at Citizens Bank Park, which opened in 2004. "It was a really easy sell to baseball to host the game here in Philadelphia," Phillies managing partner John Middleton said. "It's the logical place."

DENIS KENNEDY/MLB PHOTOS

A GAME WITH NO RIVAL

With MLB RIVALS, experience baseball action on PC and mobile with lifelike graphics and epic competition starring real-life teams, players and stadiums. To add to the authentic presentation, MLB RIVALS has partnered with the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum to celebrate the history and enduring legacy of baseball, and added the beloved voices of Joe Davis (play-by-play) and Orel Hershiser (commentary) to the game.

Test your skills and face the competition across an array of game modes, including single- and multiplayer modes like League, Live Match and Ranked Slugger. By using motion capture to bring the players' unique forms and actual movements to the game, MLB RIVALS offers an immersive, wholly authentic presentation. Download MLB RIVALS on Steam, Apple App Store, or Google Play Store.



SHOW TIME!

"Forge your journey from high school to the Hall of Fame, become a legend, and live out your baseball dreams in MLB® The Show™ 25. For the first time ever, experience high school and college years in Road to The Show, try out new Diamond Quest and Weekend Classic modes in Diamond Dynasty, and play through new gameplay enhancements. Don't forget to enjoy MLB® The Show™ Storylines, which immerses you into the stories and careers of some of the greatest players in sports history. In partnership with the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, play through and celebrate the careers of Negro League Baseball legends such as Josh Gibson, Buck Leonard, Hank Aaron and Toni Stone in a video game experience unlike any other. For all the latest news, be sure to follow us on social media @mlbtheshow and visit theshow.com."

THAT'S THE SPIRIT!

MLB PRO SPIRIT brings the excitement of the big leagues to your mobile device in a fast, fun and action-packed baseball experience. Officially licensed by MLB, this game lets you build your dream team with real players from all 30 teams, compete in online matchups, and chase the World Series in Season mode. With authentic stadiums, uniforms and immersive sounds, every pitch and swing feels like the real deal. Play quick, three-minute casual games, level up your roster, and join limited-time events for exclusive rewards. Whether you're on the go or at home, MLB PRO SPIRIT keeps the spirit of the game alive!

ON THE AIR

FOX

FOX Sports' coverage of the 121st World Series, the 26th straight broadcast by FOX and the network's 28th overall, begins on Friday, Oct. 24.

INTERNATIONAL

Major League Baseball focuses on the worldwide growth of baseball and the promotion of Major League Baseball and MLB Club trademarks and copyrights through special events, broadcasting, market development, licensing and sponsorship initiatives. MLB is committed to showcasing the world's best baseball talent through international events around the globe. Available in over 203 countries and territories, Major League Baseball games will be broadcast by 72 media outlets in 16 different languages during the 2025 MLB season. With an extensive list of marketing partners worldwide, MLBI continues to grow its position as a leader in the international marketplace.

The MLB Network will once again be producing this year's international feed. MLBI continues its longstanding relationship with the U.S. military in 2025 as all Postseason games will be broadcast over the American Forces Network. In addition, MLBI will produce four region-specific virtual signage feeds for the 2025 World Series.

Calling the game in English will be Dave Flemming, the radio voice of the San Francisco Giants since 2003. He is joined by Colorado Rockies broadcaster and former Major Leaguer Ryan Spilborghs.

MLB NETWORK

MLB Network will air extensive live coverage of the 2025 World Series, with previews, analysis, highlights and interviews during its Emmy Award–winning show "MLB Tonight," as well as on "The Leadoff Spot," "MLB Central," "MLB Now" and "Intentional Talk." MLB Network's Yonder Alonso, Greg Amsinger, Sean Casey, Ryan Dempster, Mark DeRosa, Robert Flores, Cliff Floyd, Brian Kenny, Abby Labar, Al Leiter, Kevin Millar, Steve Phillips, Jake Peavy, Dan Plesac, Albert Pujols, Anthony Recker, Harold Reynolds, Siera Santos, Joel Sherman, Xavier Scruggs, Lauren Shehadi, Matt Vasgersian, Adnan Virk, Ben Verlander and Chris Young will be part of MLB Network's Fall Classic coverage. To find MLB Network in your area, visit MLBNetwork.com.

ESPN RADIO

ESPN Radio's 28th consecutive season covering the MLB Postseason will culminate with live coverage of the World Series. Jon "Boog" Sciambi will again be on the play-by-play for the Fall Classic alongside analysts Eduardo Perez and Jessica Mendoza, and reporter Buster Olney.

THREE PILES OF LAUNDRY.

TWO LOADS OF DISHES.

ONE BATH NEEDED.

AND IT'S ONLY THE BOTTOM OF THE THIRD.

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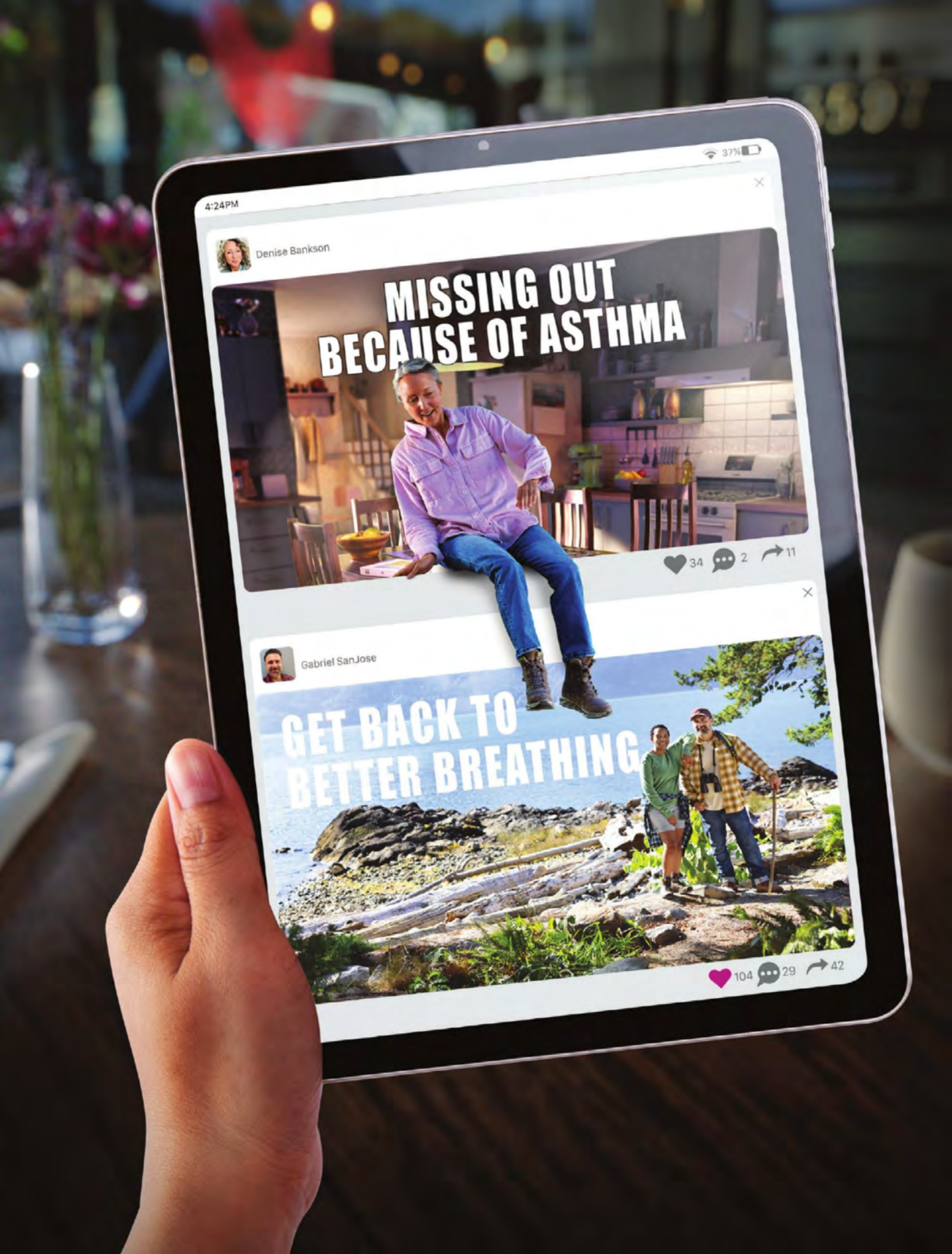
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BECAUSE OF ASTHMA
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Gabriel SanJose
GET BACK TO
BETTER BREATHING
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42

FASENRA is proven to help:

• Prevent asthma attacks • Improve breathing • Lower daily use of oral steroids*

FASENRA 8-week dosing offers patients the fewest doses per year.†‡

*Results may vary. †The first 3 doses are given on day 1, week 4, and week 8.
‡Dosing comparisons do not imply similar efficacy or safety.

Talk to your doctor or visit FASENRA.com

APPROVED USE

FASENRA is a prescription medicine used with other asthma medicines for the maintenance treatment of asthma in people 6 years and older whose asthma is not controlled with their current asthma medicines. FASENRA is not used to treat sudden breathing problems.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Do not use FASENRA if you are allergic to benralizumab or any of the ingredients in FASENRA.

Do not use to treat sudden breathing problems.

FASENRA may cause serious side effects, including:

- **allergic (hypersensitivity) reactions, including anaphylaxis.** Serious allergic reactions can happen after you get your FASENRA injection. Allergic reactions can sometimes happen hours or days after you get your injection. Tell your healthcare provider or get emergency help right away if you have any of the following symptoms of an allergic reaction:
  - swelling of your face, mouth and tongue
  - breathing problems
  - fainting, dizziness, feeling lightheaded (low blood pressure)
  - rash
  - hives

Before using FASENRA, tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- are taking oral or inhaled corticosteroid medicines. **Do not** stop taking your corticosteroid medicines unless instructed by your healthcare provider. This may cause other symptoms that were controlled by the corticosteroid medicine to come back
- have a parasitic (helminth) infection
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if FASENRA will harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant during your treatment with FASENRA
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if FASENRA passes into your breast milk. Talk to your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby if you use FASENRA
- are taking prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, or herbal supplements

Do not stop taking your other asthma medicines unless instructed to do so by your healthcare provider. Tell your healthcare provider if your asthma does not get better or if it gets worse after you start treatment with FASENRA.

The most common side effects of FASENRA include: headache and sore throat.
These are not all the possible side effects of FASENRA.

You are encouraged to report the negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA.
Visit www.FDA.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see Brief Summary of full Prescribing Information on adjacent page.

MOVE FORWARD WITH

Fasenra®

(benralizumab) Subcutaneous injection

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT FASENRA

Read this brief summary carefully before using FASENRA for the first time and each time you use a new dose. There may be new information. This summary does not take the place of talking to your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment.

What is FASENRA?

FASENRA is a prescription medicine used:

- with other asthma medicines for the maintenance treatment of asthma in people 6 years and older whose asthma is not controlled with their current asthma medicines. FASENRA helps prevent severe asthma attacks (exacerbations) and may improve your breathing.
- to treat people 18 years and older with eosinophilic granulomatosis with polyangiitis (EGPA).

- FASENRA reduces blood eosinophils. Eosinophils are a type of white blood cell that may contribute to your condition.
- FASENRA is not used to treat sudden breathing problems.
- Tell your healthcare provider if your asthma does not get better or if it gets worse after you start treatment with FASENRA.

It is not known if FASENRA is safe and effective in children with asthma under 6 years of age.

It is not known if FASENRA is safe and effective in children with EGPA under 18 years of age.

Do not use FASENRA if you are allergic to benralizumab or any of the ingredients in FASENRA. See the end of this leaflet for a complete list of ingredients in FASENRA.

Before using FASENRA, tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- are taking oral or inhaled corticosteroid medicines. **Do not** stop taking your corticosteroid medicines unless instructed by your healthcare provider. This may cause other symptoms that were controlled by the corticosteroid medicine to come back.
- have a parasitic (helminth) infection.
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if FASENRA will harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant during your treatment with FASENRA.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if FASENRA passes into your breast milk. You and your healthcare provider should decide if you will use FASENRA and breastfeed. Talk to your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby if you use FASENRA.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

Do not stop taking your other medicines for your condition unless your healthcare provider tells you to.

How will I use FASENRA?

- FASENRA is injected under your skin (subcutaneously):
  - one time every 4 weeks for the first 3 doses and then every 8 weeks, for asthma.
  - one time every 4 weeks for EGPA.
- FASENRA comes in a single dose prefilled syringe and in a single dose autoinjector.
- A healthcare provider will inject FASENRA using the single-dose prefilled syringe.
- If your healthcare provider decides that you or a caregiver can give the injection of FASENRA, you or your caregiver should receive training on the right way to prepare and give the injection using the FASENRA PEN.
- In people aged 6 to 11 years, FASENRA should only be given by a caregiver or healthcare provider.
- **Do not** try to inject FASENRA until you have been shown the right way by your healthcare provider. **See the detailed "Instructions for Use" that comes with FASENRA PEN for information on how to prepare and inject FASENRA.**
- If you miss a dose of FASENRA, call your healthcare provider.

What are the possible side effects of FASENRA?

FASENRA may cause serious side effects, including:

- **allergic (hypersensitivity) reactions, including anaphylaxis.** Serious allergic reactions can happen after you get your FASENRA injection. Allergic reactions can sometimes happen hours or days after you get your injection. Tell your healthcare provider or get emergency help right away if you have any of the following symptoms of an allergic reaction:
  - swelling of your face, mouth and tongue
  - breathing problems
  - fainting, dizziness, feeling lightheaded (low blood pressure)
  - rash
  - hives

The most common side effects of FASENRA include headache and sore throat.

These are not all the possible side effects of FASENRA.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

How should I store FASENRA?

- Store FASENRA in the refrigerator between 36°F to 46°F (2°C to 8°C).
- FASENRA may be stored at room temperature between 68°F to 77°F (20°C to 25°C) **for up to 14 days**.
- Once removed from the refrigerator and brought to room temperature FASENRA must be used within 14 days or thrown away.
- Store FASENRA in the original carton until you are ready to use it to protect it from light.
- Do not freeze FASENRA. Do not use FASENRA that has been frozen.
- Do not expose FASENRA to heat.
- Do not use FASENRA past the expiration date.
- **Keep FASENRA and all medicines out of the reach of children.**

General information about the safe and effective use of FASENRA.

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Patient Information leaflet. Do not use FASENRA for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give FASENRA to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them.

You can ask your doctor or pharmacist for information about FASENRA that is written for healthcare providers.

What are the ingredients in FASENRA?

Active ingredient: benralizumab

Inactive ingredients: L-histidine, L-histidine hydrochloride monohydrate, polysorbate 20, α,α-trehalose dihydrate, and Water for Injection

The information provided here is not comprehensive.
Ask your healthcare provider for additional information about FASENRA.
You can also contact the company that makes FASENRA (toll-free) at 1-800-236-9933 or at www.fasenra.com.

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BY SARAH LANGS

2025 THE SEASON IN REVIEW

Baseball was a joy to watch in 2025 — as it always is. We saw seasoned veteran stars continue to awe and new names join those ranks of the best in the game. We said goodbye to fan favorites and witnessed historic firsts. We spent time on the edges of our seats, locked in on the drama. In short, baseball was the best, yet again. Here were some of the biggest stories of the 2025 regular season.

YOU CAN ABSOLUTELY CALL IT A COMEBACK

The Guardians engineered the ultimate comeback to win the AL Central. Cleveland was as many as 15 ½ games behind in the division in early July. That is the largest deficit overcome to win a division (since 1969) or league (1900-68), according to the Elias Sports Bureau. Their 11-game September deficit is the largest to overcome in that same span.

DIVISIONAL UNCERTAINTY

It wasn't just the AL Central. This was the first season since the split to six divisions (1994) where at least one team from all six divisions had a lead of at least 5.5 games, and at some point later in the season fell out of first place after that lead, per Elias. Congrats to the Blue Jays, Guardians, Mariners, Phillies, Brewers and Dodgers for emerging as division champs.

HOW THE WEST WAS WON

Dan Wilson played for the Mariners when they last won the AL West in 2001. Now he manages them. He became the third individual to play for and then manage sequential division titles for a team, joining Craig Counsell with the Brewers (2011 player, '18 manager) and Bruce Bochy with the Padres (1984, '96), per Elias.

NICK CAMMETT/GETTY IMAGES (GUARDIANS); NIK PENNINGTON/AP PHOTO (MARINERS); JOHN FISHER/GETTY IMAGES

FAMILIAR PARTICIPANTS

The Yankees clinched their 60th postseason appearance in 2025, by far the most of any team. The next-most belong to the Dodgers, at 39. Speaking of the Dodgers, 2025 marked their 13th consecutive playoff appearance, tying the 1995-2007 Yankees for the second-longest such streak in postseason history. Only the 1991-2005 Braves had a longer streak, at 14. The Dodgers' NL West title was their 23rd, tying the Braves for the most since division play began in 1969.

JAMIE SQUIRE/GETTY IMAGES (OHTANI); DANIEL SHIREY/MLB PHOTOS (RALEIGH); MARY DECICCO/MLB PHOTOS

SHO-TIME

Shohei Ohtani had another unprecedented season, establishing yet another 50-50 club. This time, it was at least 50 home runs as a hitter and 50 strikeouts as a pitcher. The only other player with any strikeouts as a pitcher in a 50-homer season is Babe Ruth, with three strikeouts in 1921. Ohtani's 55 home runs set a Dodgers franchise record for a single season, breaking his mark from 2024. Of his 55 home runs, 51 were out of the leadoff spot. That's 10 more than any other player in a season in MLB history.

BIG DUMPER

Cal Raleigh had a season for the ages, hitting 60 home runs to establish single-season records for both switch-hitters and primary catchers (min. 50% of games at catcher). Raleigh joined Judge, Barry Bonds, Sammy Sosa, Mark McGwire, Roger Maris and Ruth as the only others with 60 homers in a season. He also had 11 multi-homer games, tying the single-season record.

ALL RISE

Speaking of being spectacular yet again, there's Aaron Judge, who won the AL batting title, leading the Majors at .331. He also hit 53 homers. That's the most home runs by a player who won the batting title. The only other players to win a batting title in a 50-homer season are 1956 Mickey Mantle (52 HR) and 1938 Jimmie Foxx (50). Judge hit 20 homers in the first inning, two more than any other player in any inning in history.

SCHWARBS

Kyle Schwarber was one of four players with at least 50 home runs this season, along with the three we just mentioned. That tied the all-time record for 50-homer hitters in a season, also done in 1998 and 2001. Schwarber has hit 187 home runs during his four years with the Phillies. That's the third-most home runs by a player in his first four seasons with a club, behind McGwire with the Cardinals (191) and Ruth with the Yankees (189).

FIRST YEAR IN FLUSHING

Juan Soto hit a career-high 43 home runs and notched a career-high 38 stolen bases in his first season with the Mets. Soto became the first player with a 40-homer season for both the Yankees and Mets. He's also the second player with at least 40 home runs, 35 stolen bases and 100 walks in at least one season in MLB history. It was also done by 1996-97 Bonds.

THIS IS 30

Soto was one of a record seven players with a 30-30 season, breaking the previous mark of four. Soto and Francisco Lindor became the third pair of teammates to have 30-30 in the same year. Julio Rodríguez became the first Mariners player with multiple. Jazz Chisholm Jr. became the third Yankees player to go 30-30. José Ramírez has three such seasons; all other Guardians players have two. Pete Crow-Armstrong joined Sosa as the only Cubs with a 30-30 season.

CORBIN BARRELS

Corbin Carroll became the first player in D-backs history with at least 30 home runs and 30 stolen bases in a season. But that's not all. Add in his triples and he was just the third player in MLB history with at least 30 homers, 15 triples and 30 stolen bases in a season. He joined Jimmy Rollins in 2007 and Willie Mays in 1957.

SKENES DAY

Following up on a great first season in 2024, Paul Skenes finished his second year in the Majors with a microscopic 1.97 ERA. He became the first qualified pitcher with a sub-2.00 ERA in his age-23 season or younger since Dwight Gooden in 1985 (1.53). He was also the first qualified Pirates pitcher with a sub-2.00 ERA in the Live Ball Era (since 1920). At 23 years and 122 days, Skenes became the fourth-youngest pitcher to lead MLB qualifiers in ERA by age at end of a season, older than only 1985 Gooden (20y, 324d), 1976 Mark Fidrych (22y, 50d) and 1914 Dutch Leonard (22y, 177d).

CROCHET-ING

In his first season in Boston, Garrett Crochet led MLB with 255 strikeouts. It's the fourth time a Red Sox pitcher finished with at least a share of the lead in K's, joining 2017 Chris Sale, and 1988 & '91 Roger Clemens. He is the fourth pitcher with 250 strikeouts and less than 65 runs allowed in his first 32 outings with a team, along with 2017-18 Justin Verlander (Astros), 1997 Clemens (Blue Jays) and 1972 Nolan Ryan.

SKUUUUUB

Tarik Skubal followed up his 2024 Cy Young season with another strong campaign. He had 12 scoreless starts of at least six innings, tying 2014 Adam Wainwright for the most by a pitcher since the mound was lowered in 1969. Skubal also had seven starts with at least 10 strikeouts and no walks, tying 2019 Gerrit Cole for the most in a season in at least the last 125 years.

CASTRO/MLB PHOTOS (SKENES); DANIEL SHIREY/MLB PHOTOS (CROCHET); ROB LEITER/MLB PHOTOS (SKUBAL); MARY DECICCO/MLB PHOTOS (MOOR); VINCENT MAZZ... MLB PHOTOS

YOUNG JUNIOR

On the heels of an epic home run in Game 7 of the LIDOM Championship Series for Leones del Escogido this past winter in the Dominican Republic, Junior Caminero kept slugging in his first full MLB season. He finished the year with 45 homers. He became the second-youngest player with a 45-homer season in MLB history, based on age on the final day of the season, according to Elias. Caminero was 22 years and 85 days old on the last day. Only 1953 Eddie Mathews (21 years, 349 days) was younger, when he hit 47 home runs.

BREW CREW

The Brewers won a franchise-record 97 games, surpassing the 96 they won in 2011 and '18. Those wins included two separate long win streaks — one of 14 games and another of 11. They became the 14th team with multiple win streaks of at least 11 games in a season since 1900. The only other teams to do so in the last 90 seasons are the 2015 Blue Jays, 1954 Cleveland and 1946 Red Sox.

30 BY THE BAY

Willy Adames hit his 30th home run of the season in the Giants' final game, ending a notable franchise drought. Adames became the first player with at least 30 homers in a season for the Giants since Bonds in 2004. That was the longest active drought for a team entering the year. In fact, entering 2025, every other team had at least six individual 30-homer seasons since the start of 2005, and at least one each since '19.

GEORGE GAZA/MLB PHOTOS (CAMINERO); KYLE BRIDENHAGEN/MLB PHOTOS (BREWERS); KAVIN MISTRY/MLB PHOTOS

STAY FAIR!

Nick Kurtz hit 36 homers, tied for the eighth-most by a rookie in a season. The most notable was a 493-foot home run, the longest of the 2025 regular season. That was the longest home run in the Majors since Ohtani on June 30, 2023 (493 feet). It was the A's longest home run under Statcast (2015) as well as the longest grand slam by anyone in that span. The only rookie with a longer home run than Kurtz under Statcast was Judge, twice in 2017.

FOUR, FOUR AND FOUR

Kurtz was also one of three players with a four-homer game this season, the most such performances in a year in MLB history. Kurtz's was the first four-homer game in A's franchise history as well as the first by a rookie. Eugenio Suárez's was the second four-homer game in Diamondbacks history. The D-backs became the fourth franchise with multiple individual four-homer games, joining the Phillies, Braves and Dodgers. Those three teams began playing before 1900. The Diamondbacks began in 1998. And in his, Schwarber was the fourth player to have at least one plate appearance after hitting his fourth. He joined Bobby Lowe (1894) in the first four-homer game in MLB history, Lou Gehrig (1932) and Mike Cameron (2002).

WELCOME BACK, TITO

With the Reds making the playoffs, this was the third time Terry Francona made the postseason in his first year with a team (Boston, 2004, Cleveland, 2013). He became the third manager to make the postseason in his first season with a team at least three times, per Elias. He joined Dusty Baker (2003 Cubs, 2016 Nationals, 2020 Astros) and Joe Torre (1982 Braves, 1996 Yankees, 2008 Dodgers). ◆

Sarah Langs is a researcher/reporter for MLB.com.

BRYAN KENNEDY/MLB PHOTOS (KURTZ; BRENDON BARANOV/MLB PHOTOS (SUÁREZ); RONALD MARTINEZ/GETTY IMAGES

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MANO a MANO

It's more rare than you think for two No. 1 seeds to play in the World Series, but when it happens, it's an epic clash.

BY BRIAN MURPHY

Last year's Dodgers-Yankees World Series wasn't just a matchup between two of baseball's most storied franchises. It was a matchup between the No. 1 team in each league.

And that's rare. The two top teams have gone head-to-head in the World Series only five times in the Wild Card Era (since 1995), including the 2024 matchup between New York and L.A.

In the era of expanded playoffs, even a dominant regular season guarantees little in the postseason. Even the strongest contenders have to travel a tough road to reach the World Series. That's another reason why the showdown between the Yankees and Dodgers was so special.

Here's a look back at every Fall Classic in the Divisional Era (since 1969) where No. 1 faced No. 1.

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2024
DODGERS VS. YANKEES

A Yankees-Dodgers World Series is always worth the wait, especially when both teams are powerhouses. The 2024 Fall Classic was the 12th World Series matchup between these historic rivals — the most times any two teams have met in the World Series — but their first meeting since 1981. The 2024 World Series featured baseball's biggest superstars: the Dodgers' Shohei Ohtani, Mookie Betts and Freddie Freeman vs. the Yankees' Aaron Judge, Juan Soto, Giancarlo Stanton and Gerrit Cole.

The Dodgers came out on top in five games, and two of those games, Game 1 and Game 5, were instant classics. Freeman delivered the first walk-off grand slam in World Series history in Game 1 at Dodger Stadium, and the Dodgers rallied from a 5-0 deficit — overcoming home runs by both Judge and Stanton, and Cole on the mound — to win the clinching Game 5 at Yankee Stadium, with Walker Buehler striking out Alex Verdugo to cap off the Dodgers' eighth World Series championship.

2020
RAYS VS. DODGERS

This World Series took place in front of a limited number of fans inside Texas' Globe Life Field amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet it still contained the drama and excitement that we're used to in October. Game 4 was the wildest of the bunch as Brett Phillips and postseason phenom Randy Arozarena combined to walk off the Dodgers in the bottom of the ninth.

Los Angeles regained control of the series in Game 5 when Clayton Kershaw outdueled future teammate Tyler Glasnow. Mookie Betts added the exclamation point in the Dodgers' Game 6 clincher with a homer leading off the bottom of the eighth en route to the franchise's first World Series title since 1988.

ALEX TRAUTWIG/MLB PHOTOS (BETTS); ELSA/GETTY IMAGES

2013
CARDINALS VS. RED SOX

Down two games to one in St. Louis, the Red Sox needed something to get the series back in their favor. And they got it on one swing by Jonny Gomes, who smashed a go-ahead three-run dinger in the sixth inning of Game 4. Boston won that night after Cardinals pinch-runner Kolten Wong was picked off for the final out, and then Red Sox pitching limited the Cards to two runs over the final two games of the series.

1999
YANKEES VS. BRAVES

The 103-win Braves were the best team during the regular season, but it was the 98-win Yankees who steamrolled the competition during the playoffs. They went 7-1 on their way to the pennant and then swept Atlanta. The Braves scored just nine runs in four games. Yankees ace Roger Clemens allowed one run over 7 2/3 innings before series MVP Mariano Rivera recorded the final four outs to give New York the middle piece of its eventual three-peat.

1995
CLEVELAND VS. ATLANTA

Good pitching beat good hitting in this battle. Cleveland's offense was a juggernaut in 1995, averaging nearly six runs per game and helping the club win 100 times in the 144-game season. But the Braves' hallowed starting pitchers held those bats in check during the Fall Classic. Greg Maddux set

the tone with a complete-game victory in Game 1. Tom Glavine followed that up with six innings of two-run ball in another Braves win the next night. Glavine secured the series for his team and MVP honors for himself by giving up just one hit over eight innings in Game 6.

1992
BLUE JAYS VS. BRAVES

The Blue Jays won this Fall Classic thanks to a quartet of one-run triumphs and a handful of clutch late-inning hits. Ed Sprague supplied the first one — a go-ahead pinch-hit home run in the ninth inning of Game 2. Kelly Gruber came up with a game-tying homer in the eighth inning of Game 3 before Candy Maldonado supplied a walk-off single in the ninth. Then, in Game 6 at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium, 41-year-old Dave Winfield registered the most pivotal play of his Hall of Fame career: a two-run double in the 11th inning that spurred the Blue Jays to their first championship.

1986
RED SOX VS. METS

One out away. Red Sox fans don't need the reminder, but they were one out away in Game 6 from knocking off the 108-win Mets and celebrating Boston's first title since 1918. But New York strung together a 10th-inning rally for the ages — single, single, single, wild pitch — to tie the game before Mookie Wilson and Bill Buckner became linked forever in baseball history.

The Red Sox carried a 3-0 advantage in Game 7 only to see the Mets catch them again. World Series MVP Ray Knight, who scored the winning run in Game 6, belted a solo homer in the seventh inning that gave the Mets a lead they would never relinquish.

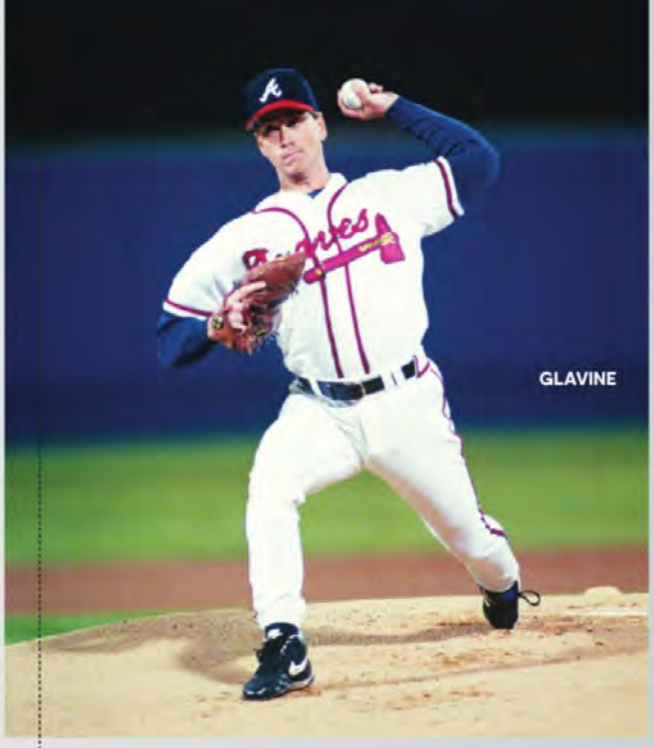
1982
BREWERS VS. CARDINALS

The Brewers returned to St. Louis looking to finish off this series in Game 6, but the Cardinals scored a 13-1 blowout and then capped it off with a 6-3 win in Game 7. Milwaukee grabbed a 3-1 lead heading to the bottom of the sixth in the finale, but run-scoring singles from Keith Hernandez and George Hendrick put the Cards on top. World Series MVP Darrell Porter and Steve Braun provided some breathing room with RBI knocks in the eighth before Hall of Fame closer Bruce Sutter sealed it.

1979
PIRATES VS. ORIOLES

The Pirates became the second team in World Series history to have three players with at least 11 hits in a series. No offense to Phil Garner or Omar Moreno, who were fantastic, but this series was about one man and one man only: Willie Stargell.

The Pirates' heart and soul, in his age-39 season, was named co-National League MVP with St. Louis' Keith Hernandez and earned World Series MVP honors with a four-hit performance in Game 7, highlighted by his go-ahead home run in the sixth. The man known as "Pops" went 12-for-30 with seven extra-base hits in the Fall Classic, lifting Pittsburgh out of a 3-1 series deficit to take down the 102-win Orioles.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1978
YANKEES VS. DODGERS

This World Series rematch looked like it would have a different outcome once Dodgers rookie Bob Welch fanned Reggie Jackson to give the Dodgers a 2-0 series lead as the teams headed for the Bronx. But the Yanks got the most out of their home-field advantage and took all three games at Yankee Stadium. In Game 6, Jackson got his revenge against Welch with a prodigious homer that was the cherry on top of the Yankees' World Series repeat.

1976
YANKEES VS. REDS

Two years before the Yanks' repeat, they were on the losing end as the Big Red Machine celebrated back-to-back championships with a lopsided series victory. Cincinnati outscored New York, 22-8. Johnny Bench, the series MVP, went 8-for-15 with two homers in the Game 4 clincher.

1971
PIRATES VS. ORIOLES

The Pirates won two World Series during the 1970s and both of them involved a Game 7 victory in Baltimore with a franchise icon leading the way. This time, it was Roberto Clemente, who had 12 hits in 29 at-bats. Like Stargell in '79, Clemente provided the most valuable hit of the series: a home run in Game 7.

1970
ORIOLES VS. REDS

This stood as MLB's most recent World Series involving two 100-win teams until the Astros and Dodgers met in 2017. The 108-win O's outclassed the 102-win Reds through three games, thanks to big hits from AL MVP Boog Powell and strong mound performances from Jim Palmer and Dave McNally. Cincinnati staved off elimination in Game 4, but the Orioles sat atop the baseball world after Game 5, washing away the bitter memories from the final series on this list.

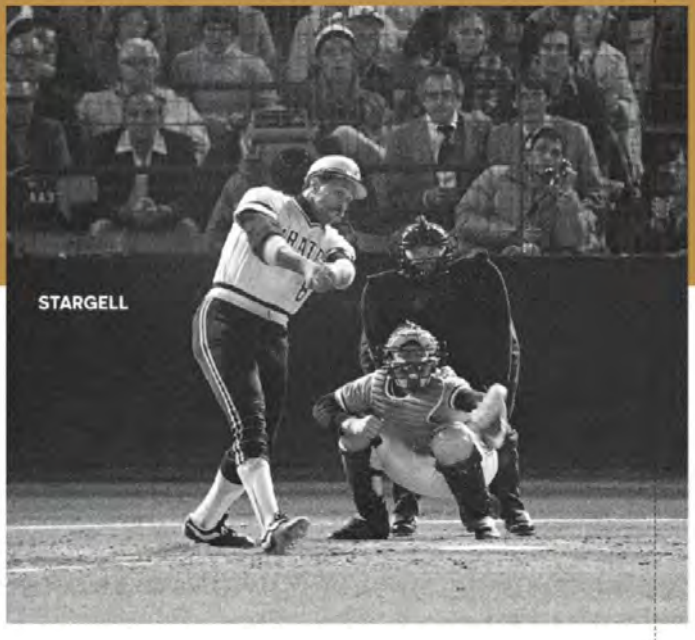
1969
METS VS. ORIOLES

The Miracle Mets hadn't won more than 73 games in a season before winning 100 games in '69. Still, they were heavy underdogs against the 109-win Orioles. But anything can happen in the postseason.

After Baltimore won Game 1, New York's pitching limited the Orioles' lineup to five runs over the next four games — all Mets wins. NL Cy Young Award winner Tom Seaver tossed a 10-inning complete game in Game 4. Jerry Koosman turned in his second gem of the series in Game 5, going the distance to finish the upset. ◆

Brian Murphy is a reporter for MLB.com.

1986 METS



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Fall Classics

It's a prestigious enough honor to earn a World Series MVP award, but here's how a team of the best MVPs would look.

BY JASON FOSTER

THE ALL-OCTOBER TEAM

The World Series MVP can come from anywhere on a team's roster. He can be a familiar name or a relative unknown, a dominant reliever or an All-Star slugger, a standout rookie or a veteran utility man.

For some players, the spotlight of the Fall Classic enhances their already strong abilities. For others, it ups their game to levels previously unseen. Every position on the field has been represented at least once since the award was first handed out in 1955. All winners have been worthy, but some performances have drawn particular attention.

Here's our All-World Series MVP team.

C

JOHNNY BENCH

Reds, 1976

Bench was just as good in the postseason as he was during the rest of his Hall of Fame career. In 10 postseason series from 1970 to 1979, Bench hit 10 homers and had an .862 OPS. But his MVP performance in the 1976 World Series was the clear standout. In the Reds' four-game sweep of the Yankees, Bench hit .533 across 15 plate appearances with a double, a triple, two homers and a 1.667 OPS. The two homers both came in the decisive Game 4, when Bench drove in five runs as Cincinnati won the title.

1B

FREDDIE FREEMAN

Dodgers, 2024

It was a postseason performance of historic proportions for Freeman in the 2024 World Series. In a hobbled performance that would make Kirk Gibson proud, Freeman nursed a sprained ankle all the way to October glory. In Game 1, he hit the first walk-off grand slam in World Series history. He didn't stop there, though. In the five-game series, Freeman tied the World Series record with 12 RBIs, became one of only two players to homer in four straight games in a single Series, and finished with an absurd 1.364 OPS.

2B

BOBBY RICHARDSON

Yankees, 1960

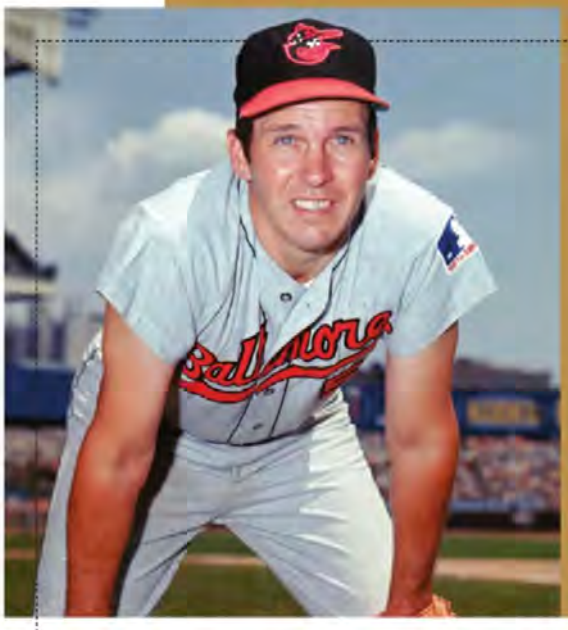
Richardson's performance in the 1960 World Series was strong enough that he won MVP despite being on the losing team — the only time that's happened in the history of the Fall Classic. In the seven-game series between the Yankees and Pirates, Richardson hit .367 with 11 hits, including a homer, two doubles, two triples and 12 RBIs, which led both teams.

3B

BROOKS ROBINSON

Orioles, 1970

Robinson did enough with his bat to take MVP honors in the 1970 World Series, but his performance with the glove took things over the top. Along with hitting .429 with two homers and a 1.238 OPS to lead the Orioles to a title over the Reds in five games, Robinson turned in defensive gems throughout the series, keeping Reds hitters off base with the elite defense for which he was known. "He caught everything but a cold," Cincinnati's Pete Rose said.



SS

COREY SEAGER

Dodgers, Rangers, 2020, 2023

Seager is one of four players to win more than one World Series MVP, and one of just two to win the award with multiple teams. His big performance for the Dodgers in the 2020 World Series against the Rays came just a few days after his MVP showing in the NLCS, when he slugged an incredible .897 against the Braves. Then in the World Series, Seager hit .400 with two homers and a 1.256 OPS in six

AP (BENCH); DANIEL SHIREY/MLB PHOTOS (SEAGER); LOUIS REQUENA/MLB PHOTOS

games. In 2023 with the Rangers, he again took World Series MVP honors after he hit three homers in five games and drove in six runs as Texas beat the D-backs in five games.

OF

GEORGE SPRINGER

Astros, 2017

Choosing Springer as the MVP of the 2017 World Series was an easy call. The Astros' center fielder tied the all-time record with five homers in the series, including three on the road at Dodger Stadium as Houston won its first title in franchise history. Overall, he hit .379 with 11 hits across seven games with a 1.471 OPS and a series-best seven RBIs. Springer recorded multiple hits in four of the seven games, including a 3-for-5 performance in Game 2.

OF

REGGIE JACKSON

A's, Yankees, 1973, 1977

Jackson is another of the four to win multiple World Series MVP awards and, along with Seager, is the only other player to win it with more than one team. While Jackson's postseason exploits were already well-known by the mid-'70s (he had a .941 OPS in the '73 World Series to win the MVP), it wasn't until 1977 that he truly earned the Mr. October moniker. Jackson became the first player in MLB history to club five homers in a single World Series, highlighted by his three homers on three consecutive swings in the decisive Game 6 as the Yankees bested the Dodgers to win the title. Jackson hit .450 in that series, with a series-best eight RBIs and 1.792 OPS.

OF

ROBERTO CLEMENTE

Pirates, 1971

Clemente was the clear standout of the 1971 World Series between the Pirates and Orioles. He led all regular starters in average (.414), hits (12), on-base percentage (.452), slugging percentage (.759) and total bases (22). He also hit two homers, tied for the most in the series, one of which included a key go-ahead long ball in the deciding Game 7 as Pittsburgh beat Baltimore for the championship.

DH

DAVID ORTIZ

Red Sox, 2013

Big Papi's 2013 World Series numbers are astonishing. In the six-game series in which the Red Sox beat the Cardinals to capture their third title in 10 seasons, Ortiz hit .688 across 25 plate appearances with 11 hits, including two homers, two doubles and a series-best six RBIs. He also had eight walks, which brought his on-base percentage to an absurd .760. It all added up to an OPS of 1.948, the second-highest World Series OPS of all time for a player with at least 20 plate appearances.

SP (RH)
BOB GIBSON
Cardinals, 1964, 1967

Gibson is another of the four players to win multiple World Series MVPs, so it's a no-brainer that you'd want him on the mound for your All-World Series MVP team. But it's his 1967 Fall Classic performance that deserves special attention. Gibson went 3-0 in the series with three complete games, including a shutout, and a 1.00 ERA across 27 innings as the Cardinals beat the Red Sox in seven games. He even hit a homer in Game 7.

SP (LH)
SANDY KOUFAX
Dodgers, 1963, 1965

Koufax is the final player on this list to win two World Series MVPs. While the lefty's 1963 showing was certainly impressive (2-0, 1.50 ERA and 23 strikeouts in 18 innings), his 1965 performance took things up a notch. Koufax went 2-1 with two shutouts — including one in Game 7 on two days' rest — and carried an 0.38 ERA for the series. He also fanned 29 batters in 24 innings, including 10 in Game 7, as the Dodgers beat the Twins to win it all.

RP (RH)
MARIANO RIVERA
Yankees, 1999

Only three primary relievers have won a World Series MVP. But when one of them also happens to be the greatest reliever in MLB history, he gets the nod for our team. Rivera's performance in the 1999 World Series against the Braves was fairly ho-hum by his standards. But it was also prime Rivera. He finished three games, pitched 4 2/3 innings, and recorded a win and two saves without allowing a run as the Yankees swept Atlanta to close out the '90s — and the 1900s — with their 25th championship.

RP (LH)
MADISON BUMGARNER
Giants, 2014

We admit to taking some liberty here. Though Bumgarner was never a primary reliever, none of the relievers who have won a World Series MVP are left-handed. But Bumgarner's postseason pedigree is undisputed, in large part because of the five scoreless innings he pitched in relief to save Game 7 of the 2014 World Series against the Royals. This came after Bumgarner made two starts and won two games in the series. Overall, his series ERA was just 0.43. That's lockdown stuff, no matter the role. ◆

Jason Foster is a reporter for MLB.com.

On the bench: Derek Jeter (2000), Alan Trammell (1984), Manny Ramirez (2004)
In the bullpen: Randy Johnson (2001), Orel Hershiser (1988), Rollie Fingers (1974)

MLB PHOTOS (RIVERA); MARVIN E. NEWMAN/SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

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*1 CPU Performance is based on Geekbench v6.2 Single-Core on Windows 11 OS run in October 2024. Snapdragon X Elite (XIE-80-100) was tested using a Dell XPS 13 (9345) on "Balanced" Power Mode in Windows and "Optimized" in Dell Power Manager. Intel Core Ultra 7 256V was tested using a Dell XPS 13 (9350) on "Balanced" Power Mode in Windows and "Standard mode" in Windows and "Optimized" in Dell Power Manager. The AMD Ryzen AI 9 HX 370 was tested using an ASUS VivoBook S14 (M5406WA) on "Balanced" Power Mode in Windows and "Standard mode" in MyASUS. Power and performance comparison reflects results based on measurements and hardware instrumentation of given devices. Battery life varies significantly with device, settings, usage, and other factors.

1. Performance is based on Cinebench Single Core run in Windows 11. Snapdragon X Elite (X1E-80-100) was tested using a Dell XPS 13 (9345). The Intel Core Ultra 7 256V was tested using a Dell XPS 13 (9350). On battery performance measured on "Balanced" Power Mode in Windows and "Optimized" in Dell Power Manager for both devices. Power and performance comparison reflects results based on measurements and hardware instrumentation of given devices; results may vary based on device power settings and/or OEM configurations. Battery life varies significantly with device, settings, usage, and other factors.

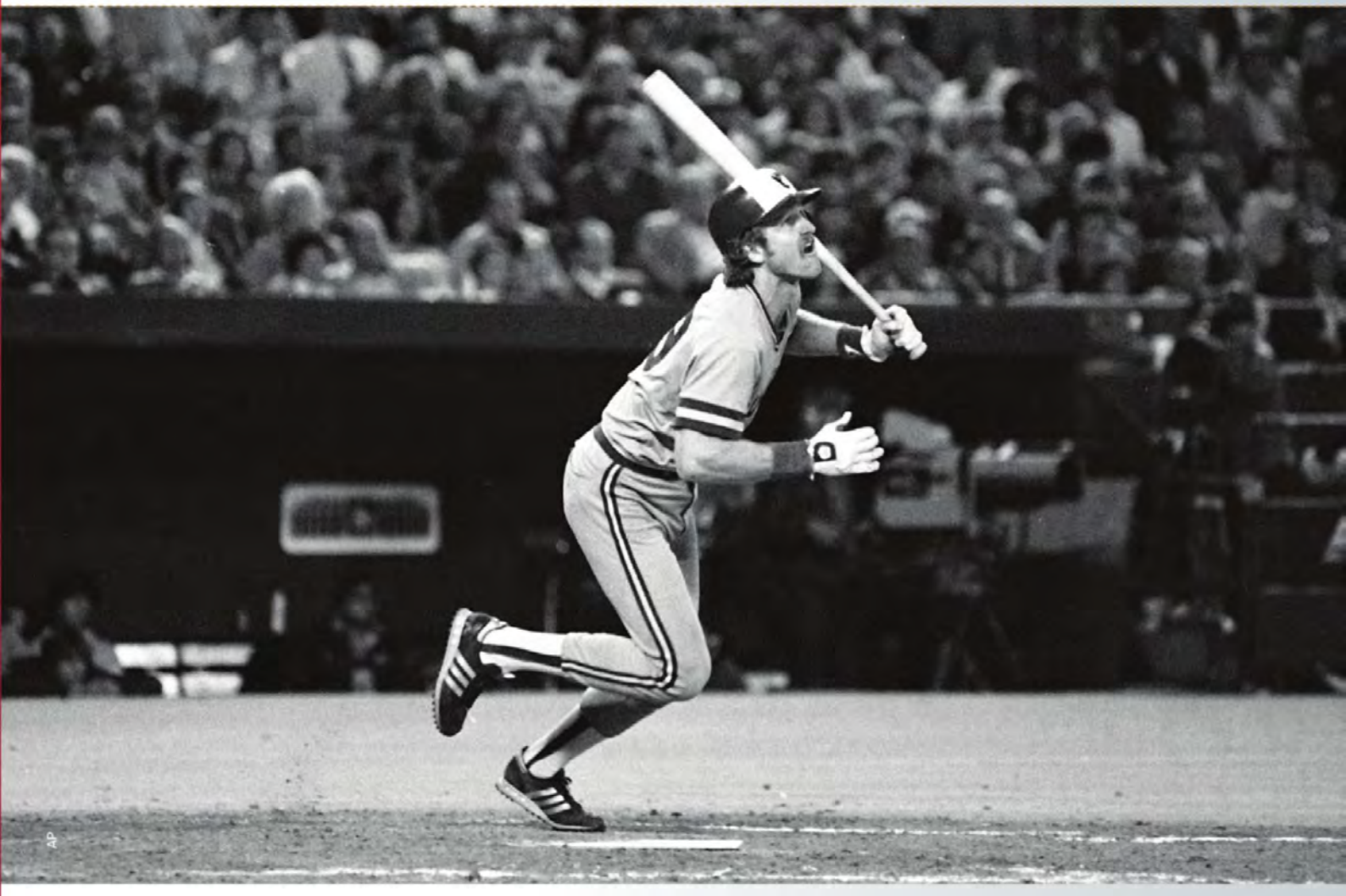
2. Performance & device temperature measured while running UL Procyon AI Computer Vision on the NPU in Windows 11 in October 2024. Snapdragon X Elite (X1E-80-100) was tested using a Dell XPS 13 (9345). The Intel Core Ultra 7 256V was tested using a Dell XPS 13 (9350). On battery performance measured on "Balanced" Power Mode in Windows and "Optimized" in Dell Power Manager for both devices. Power, thermal, performance comparison reflects results based on measurements and hardware instrumentation of given devices.

Fall Classics

Winning a World Series is *hard*, and these title-starved fan bases know it better than anybody.

BY MATT KELLY, ANDREW SIMON AND SARAH LANGS

YA GOTTA BELIEVE



AP

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Each season begins with optimism across the 30 MLB fan bases, and each one ends with some level of disappointment for 29 of them.

Only one team can win the World Series every year, but some fan bases have been waiting a long time to see their team raise the Commissioner's Trophy.

Five teams entered 2025 with a chance to win their first championship, including the Brewers, Padres and Mariners. The Guardians (last title in 1948), Orioles (last title in 1983), Tigers (last title in 1984) and Mets (last title in 1986) are among the teams facing a lengthy drought.

The Rangers ended what was MLB's second-longest active title drought in 2023 when they won it all for the first time in franchise history. Still, 14 of the 30 MLB teams have gone at least 27 seasons — since MLB's most recent expansion in 1998 — without winning the World Series.

Here is a look at the longest active championship droughts, all of which go backto at least 1998.

PETE LEABO/AP

Guardians

75 SEASONS

Last title in 1948

Cleveland has had its chances during this time, but it lost the World Series in 1954, '95, '97 and 2016 — four of the club's 14 postseason appearances since beating the Boston Braves in the 1948 Fall Classic. The franchise is 0-4 in potential championship clinchers over its past two trips to the Series, having squandered a 3-1 advantage in 2016 to a Cubs team that ended a rather notable drought of its own. It also has struggled with its back against the wall. The Guardians had an MLB-record streak of 11 straight elimination-game losses before beating the Tigers in Games 4 and 5 of the 2024 ALDS (Cleveland then lost to the Yankees in five games in the ALCS).

Brewers/Pilots

56 SEASONS

No titles

After one season in Seattle, the franchise moved to Milwaukee in 1970. It has made just one Fall Classic, in '82, when the Brew Crew was unable to finish off a 3-games-to-2 lead against the Cardinals. Milwaukee has since made two National League Championship Series appearances.

Padres

56 SEASONS

No titles

An expansion team in 1969, San Diego has yet to bring home a title. There were World Series chances in '84 and '98, but the Padres won just one Fall Classic game overall in those years against the Tigers and Yankees, respectively. The Padres made the playoffs in 2022 and upset the Mets and Dodgers to reach the NLCS. But their quest to give the city of San Diego its first World Series crown ended when the Phillies beat them in five games.

Mariners
48 SEASONS
No titles

With the Nationals making it to the Fall Classic in 2019, that left the Mariners as the only franchise without an appearance in baseball's championship event. Seattle made it as far as the American League Championship Series in 1995, 2000 and '01, when it won 116 regular-season games. The Mariners ended their 21-year postseason drought in 2022 before losing to the division-rival Astros in the ALDS.

Pirates
45 SEASONS
Last title in 1979

Only six franchises have won more championships than Pittsburgh (five), but it's been a rough road for the franchise since Barry Bonds' departure following a heartbreaking loss in Game 7 of the 1992 NLCS. The Bucs' only three postseason appearances since then (2013-15) all fell short of the NLCS.

Orioles
41 SEASONS
Last title in 1983

Baltimore's most recent trip to the World Series was its victory over the Phillies in 1983, when Cal Ripken Jr. was a 23-year-old who was only a year and a half into his consecutive-games streak. Since then, the O's have fallen in the ALCS in 1996, '97 and 2014.

Tigers
40 SEASONS
Last title in 1984

Detroit's last trip to the World Series came in 2012, when the Tigers were swept at the hands of the Giants. They've made it twice total since last winning in 1984. They also won the pennant in 2006, when they lost in five games to the 83-win Cardinals. In that span since the 1984 title, they've also found themselves on the precipice of the World Series three additional times — losing the ALCS in 1987, 2011 and 2013.

Mets
38 SEASONS
Last title in 1986

It took a series of miracles for the Mets to come back in Game 6 of the 1986 World Series before eventually prevailing in Game 7. But the magic hasn't been sufficient enough in the years since, although the Mets did enjoy plenty of memorable moments during their NL pennant runs in 2000 and '15. The franchise's most recent Hall of Famer, Mike Piazza, was 18 years old when the Mets won it all in '86.

ELAINE THOMPSON/AP (GRIFFEY); AP

OTTO GREULE/GETTY IMAGES

RICK STEWART/GETTY IMAGES

LONGEST WORLD SERIES TITLE DROUGHTS IN MLB HISTORY THAT ARE NO LONGER ACTIVE*

CUBS 107 years (1909-2016)	PHILLIES 77 years (1903-80)	TWINS/ SENATORS 62 years (1925-87)	DODGERS 52 years (1903-55)
WHITE SOX 87 years (1918-2005)	ORIOLES/ BROWNS 63 years (1903-66)	ASTROS 55 years (1962-2017)	NATIONALS/ EXPOS 50 years (1969-2019)
RED SOX 85 years (1919-2004)	RANGERS/ SENATORS 62 years (1961-2022)	GIANTS 55 years (1955-2010)	*going back to the inaugural World Series in 1903

Fall Classics

Athletics
35 SEASONS
Last title in 1989

The A's have enjoyed as many dynastic runs as any team outside the Yankees, but the last three decades have been a dry period. Innovative roster strategies have kept the A's competitive at times, particularly during the club's "Moneyball" period in the early 2000s, but it has reached just three ALCS since last winning the World Series in 1989.

Reds
34 SEASONS
Last title in 1990

The 1970s were dominated by the Big Red Machine, but aside from Cincinnati's most recent title in 1990, it's been a different story since in the Queen City. The Braves swept the Reds in the '95 NLCS, and the franchise has not advanced past the LDS since then.

Twins
33 SEASONS
Last title in 1991

The days of Jack Morris, Kirby Puckett and the "Homer Hanky" are growing further and further into the rearview mirror for the Twins. But the team has had its stars — including Joe Mauer, Justin Morneau and Johan Santana — who led Minnesota to six AL Central titles from 2002-10 before the club suffered early postseason exits. The Twins haven't advanced past the LDS round since '02.

Rockies
32 SEASONS
No titles

Colorado had all the momentum in 2007, when "Rocktober" swept Denver and the team won seven straight postseason games and the NL pennant after prevailing over the Padres in a Game 163. But the Red Sox swept the Rockies that year in the franchise's closest title attempt. Colorado has yet to capture an NL West division title.

Blue Jays
31 SEASONS
Last title in 1993

The road to the World Series title ran through Toronto at the beginning of the 1990s, but dynastic days subsided at the turn of the millennium. The Blue Jays fell in back-to-back ALCS in 2015-16, representing their closest recent attempts.

Rays
27 SEASONS
No titles

Tampa Bay averaged 97 losses over its first 10 seasons. But the tide turned in 2008, when the franchise enjoyed a 31-win turnaround and claimed its first pennant before losing to the Phillies in five games in the World Series. The Rays pushed the Dodgers one game further in 2020 but still came up short in six games. ◆

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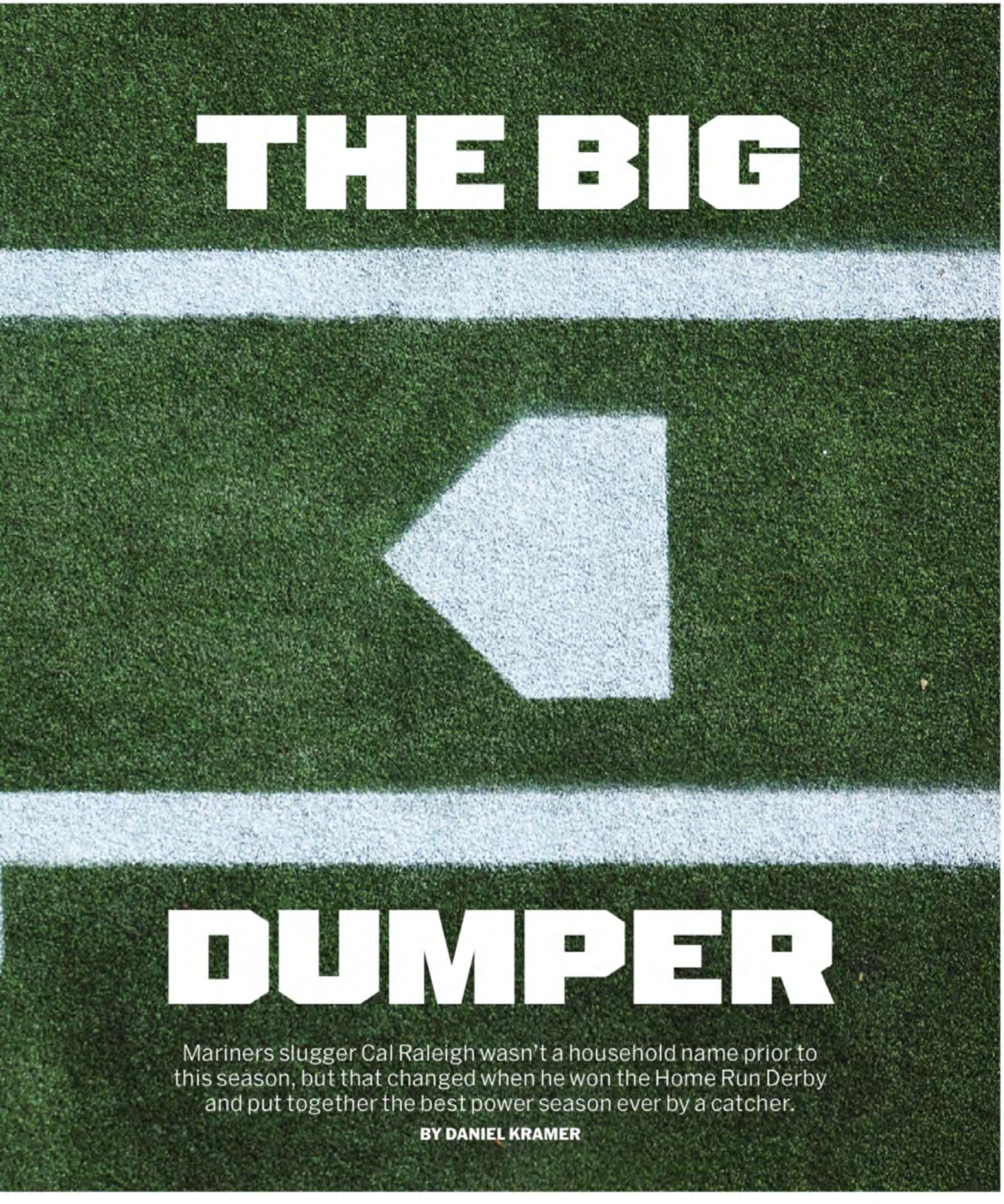

THE BIG DUMPER

Mariners slugger Cal Raleigh wasn't a household name prior to this season, but that changed when he won the Home Run Derby and put together the best power season ever by a catcher.

BY DANIEL KRAMER

CAL RALEIGH, IN MANY WAYS SINCE BREAKING into the Majors in 2021, has been hiding in plain sight.

The Mariners' catcher has been a beloved player in Seattle for the past few years, largely for being the centerpiece of one of the franchise's most iconic moments of all time, hitting a walk-off home run that snapped a 20-year postseason drought in 2022. Raleigh has endeared himself to teammates for his blue-collar work ethic, while maintaining a humble personality that hasn't changed, despite seeing his public profile soar in 2025.

But how many outside of the Pacific Northwest really knew him before this breakout season?

Raleigh has set numerous home-run records this year for his unique skill set of playing the sport's most demanding position, hitting from both sides of the plate and playing in one of the game's least hitter-friendly ballparks.

For all these reasons, his emergence from relative unknown to becoming one of MLB's most recognizable players has been arguably the biggest story in the sport this year.

You were already well known in the Pacific Northwest, but how have you handled the massive attention spike this season, especially on a national level?

I'd say the hardest part is just trying to stay focused on the main goal, and that's winning baseball games and helping this team get to where we need to get to. Obviously, doing this stuff has been awesome and amazing, but at the same time it's more focusing on the other guys in that room and team goals rather than myself. Usually when I'm focused on that, good things happen.

What's helped you strike that balance of being so productive but also saying yes to many media and off-the-field opportunities?

I think it's just handling it the right way, and understanding that every day, you have a job to do, and prioritizing that. The most important thing — like [Mariners manager] Dan [Wilson] always says, is 7 o'clock — and making sure you're locked in.

What's the origin story of the nickname "Big Dumper" — and how do you feel about the nickname?

I've always had a big butt, and that's kind of where it started. And then [former teammate] Jarred Kelenic tweeted [a congratulations with the nickname] out when I got called up. And Seattle fans, I've got to give them credit, and they kind of took it and ran with it when I started playing well. So it was a unique nickname. Obviously, not the one you would imagine, but as long as people like it, it's good with me.

What was your messaging to the Mariners' fanbase and front office when signing a six-year, $105-million extension in March?

I want to help this team get to the playoffs and win a World Series. That's the way I'm looking at it, and nothing's going to change in the sense of how I prepare. But it just feels really good. You know that these guys believe in me.

STEPH CHAMBERS/GETTY IMAGES

What would it mean to eventually bring a World Series title to the only team that has never even played in the Fall Classic?

It would mean a lot. I think that was one of the big things when deciding to sign here was wanting to be someone to bring a World Series to the city and to a place that's been so special to me and my family.

How much did legacy play into your decision to stay in Seattle long-term?

I look at guys that still come around a lot — like Alvin Davis, Dan Wilson and Ichi [Ichiro Suzuki]. They're Mariner greats and they're legends here in the city. You know how much they mean to the city, and I think that's super special, and something that money can't buy.

You grew up in North Carolina, but the Pacific Northwest has basically become a second home — how has your perspective changed of the region and fanbase since you were drafted by the Mariners in 2018?

To be honest, I didn't know a whole lot about Seattle when I was drafted. I slowly learned what this organization and city was all about. I fell in love with it. Especially since we made a run in the playoffs, this city has really embraced all of us.

What has the Mariners' fanbase meant to you?

They're great fans, they really are. They support us all the time, through the ups and downs. When you have those kinds of people in your background, it makes it really special, and it makes me want to stay here and play for them.

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You weren't always aligned with the Mariners' front office on the team's competitive direction, with some public comments at the end of the 2023 season that were critical. What's changed in the few years since?
Obviously, a couple years ago, we make it [to the postseason], and we've been right there the last couple of years as well. I believe in the guys in the room that we have right now. We have one of the best [pitching] staffs in all of baseball. Looking ahead to the future, a lot of good young prospects. I know you can't always count on that, but it's promising.

How much have you seen Seattle grow as a coveted destination for free agents?
I would tell them to believe in what we're trying to do here. Obviously, from the pitching side of it, you've already seen what we can do, and it's really impressive. And I still believe that there's still more in the tank with them. From the hitting side, I truly believe we're going to get better and continue to build. And like I said, really looking to the fanbase as well. Looking at how great they treat us here, and how much they love baseball.

Seattle's farm system is ranked No. 3 by MLB Pipeline. What are your impressions of the future faces of the organization?
I do like what I saw from Spring Training. I do believe that we've got a lot of good things going here, especially with some guys already locked up. I think it's a good mix. With that being said, it's going to be one of my jobs now to be a leader and to be a guy that can turn this into a consistent winner, and somebody that can set the culture the right way here.

How special was it to win the Home Run Derby this year — and become the first catcher and switch-hitter to do so?
I didn't even know until after it. Pretty cool. Hopefully, I can inspire some future catchers, future switch-hitters out there. Got to give credit to [my dad, Todd]. He's the one that made me both of them, catcher and a switch-hitter. Just super blessed and grateful for where I'm at.

What was your reaction to seeing the video go viral of you at age-8 professing, "I'm the Home Run Derby champ?"
The video is crazy. I don't know where they found that thing in the archives. It's just surreal. You don't think you're going to win it. You don't think you'll ever get invited. The fact that you win it with your family is super special. What a night.

What's your first memory of playing ball with your dad, who threw to you in the Derby?
It goes all the way back to him coming home and me forcing him to throw me a ball and hit it in the backyard or in the house. Then it goes back to his coaching days when he was coaching college [at Western Carolina University]. And straight after school, I went to the field. I'd hop in with the guys, hang out, do some drills sometimes, hit in the cage. I'd say that was where I fell in love with baseball.

How excited are you to play for Team USA in next year's World Baseball Classic?
It's an incredible honor. I think every kid who plays sports, that crosses everybody's mind, because in every sport, there's a country that you get to represent. Growing up, watching "Miracle," "Rocky 4," you love the USA and you want to play for your country. To get that opportunity is something you can't pass up and something I think is going to be amazing. It's great for the game of baseball, too. A couple years ago, it was awesome, just how much people were watching and invested in the games. It's going to be a lot of fun, and I'm really looking forward to it. ◆

Daniel Kramer covers the Seattle Mariners for MLB.com

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HOW TO SCORE

Different fans may have different methods of keeping score, and many use their own notations, but here's a simple method of scoring on your own:

First, fill in the starting lineup. When the game begins, start in the column corresponding to the first inning and find the box next to the name of the hitter who is at the plate. If he makes an out, write down how he was put out according to the legend below. If the hitter grounds out to shortstop, for example, write in "6-3," which shows that the shortstop threw him out at first base. The notation for a flyout to left, for example, would be "7."

If the batter gets a base hit, pencil it in according to which base he reached. The corners of the boxes represent the bases, with the lower-right corner being first. If he singles, pencil in a "–" in the lower right. If he doubles, pencil in a "=" in the upper right, and so on. If he walks, pencil in "BB" in the lower right. As the runner advances, mark the appropriate symbol in the appropriate corner.

If a runner scores, put a circle at the bottom left of the box, and inside the circle, note the symbol of the play and/or player that drove him in. For example, if the No. 5 hitter drives in two runs with a single, mark his single in the bottom right of his box and then mark a circle with the number "5" inside the boxes of the runners that scored on the hit.

At the end of each inning, total the hits and runs for that inning only. At the end of the game, add the results for each inning to get the final totals.

SAMPLE SCORESHEET

TEAM	1	2
Center Fielder	3 2 ④ –	8
Shortstop	6-4 BB	6
First Baseman	4 ⑤ FC	K
Third Baseman	= ⑤	
Right Fielder	SB 6 6-2 –	
Left Fielder	SB –	
Designated Hitter	FC	
Second Baseman	4	
Catcher		=
TOTALS (R / H)	3 / 4	0 / 1

INNING 1

- singled, advanced to 2nd on next batter's walk, took 3rd on fielder's choice, scored on No. 4 batter's double
- walked, later forced out, shortstop to 2nd base
- reached on fielder's choice, advanced to 3rd on next batter's double, scored on No. 5 batter's single
- doubled, scored on No. 5 batter's single
- singled, advanced to 2nd on next batter's single, stole 3rd base, thrown out on grounder; shortstop to catcher
- singled, stole 2nd base
- reached 1st on fielder's choice
- popped out to 2nd base

INNING 2

- flied out to center field
- popped out to shortstop
- struck out swinging
- doubled

NUMBER PLAYERS AS FOLLOWS:

1	Pitcher
2	Catcher
3	First Baseman
4	Second Baseman
5	Third Baseman
6	Shortstop
7	Left Fielder
8	Center Fielder
9	Right Fielder
DH	Designated Hitter

SYMBOLS FOR PLAYS

—	Single	BB	Walk	HBP	Hit By Pitch	DP	Double Play	L	Line Drive
=	Double	K	Strikeout	WP	Wild Pitch	E	Error	B	Bunt
≡	Triple	Ж	Called Out On Strikes	PB	Passed Ball	SF	Sacrifice Fly	U	Unassisted
≣	Home Run	F	Foul Fly	SB	Stolen Base	IBB	Intentional Walk		
SAC	Sacrifice	FC	Fielder's Choice	FO	Force Out	BK	Balk		

GAME 1

#	VISITOR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	TOTALS R H										

AB	R	H	RBI	E

PITCHERS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO

PITCHERS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO

UMPIRES
HP
1B
2B
3B
LF
RF
REPLAY

#	HOME	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	TOTALS R H										

AB	R	H	RBI	E

BALLPARK | TIME | ATTENDANCE |

GAME 2

#	VISITOR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	TOTALS R H										

AB	R	H	RBI	E

PITCHERS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO

PITCHERS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO

UMPIRES
HP
1B
2B
3B
LF
RF
REPLAY

#	HOME	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	TOTALS R H										

AB	R	H	RBI	E

BALLPARK | TIME | ATTENDANCE |

GAME 3

#	VISITOR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	TOTALS R / H										

AB	R	H	RBI	E

PITCHERS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO

PITCHERS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO

UMPIRES
HP
1B
2B
3B
LF
RF
REPLAY

#	HOME	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	TOTALS R / H										

AB	R	H	RBI	E

BALLPARK | TIME | ATTENDANCE |

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GAME 4

#	VISITOR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	TOTALS R H										

AB	R	H	RBI	E

PITCHERS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO

PITCHERS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO

UMPIRES
HP
1B
2B
3B
LF
RF
REPLAY

#	HOME	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	TOTALS R H										

AB	R	H	RBI	E

BALLPARK | TIME | ATTENDANCE |

GAME 5

#	VISITOR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	TOTALS R / H										

AB	R	H	RBI	E

PITCHERS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO

PITCHERS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO

UMPIRES
HP
1B
2B
3B
LF
RF
REPLAY

#	HOME	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	TOTALS R / H										

AB	R	H	RBI	E

BALLPARK | TIME | ATTENDANCE |

GAME 6

#	VISITOR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	TOTALS R H										

AB	R	H	RBI	E

PITCHERS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO

PITCHERS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO

UMPIRES
HP
1B
2B
3B
LF
RF
REPLAY

#	HOME	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	TOTALS R H										

AB	R	H	RBI	E

BALLPARK | TIME | ATTENDANCE |

GAME 7

#	VISITOR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	TOTALS R H										

AB	R	H	RBI	E

PITCHERS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO

PITCHERS	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO

UMPIRES
HP
1B
2B
3B
LF
RF
REPLAY

#	HOME	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	TOTALS R H										

AB	R	H	RBI	E

BALLPARK | TIME | ATTENDANCE |

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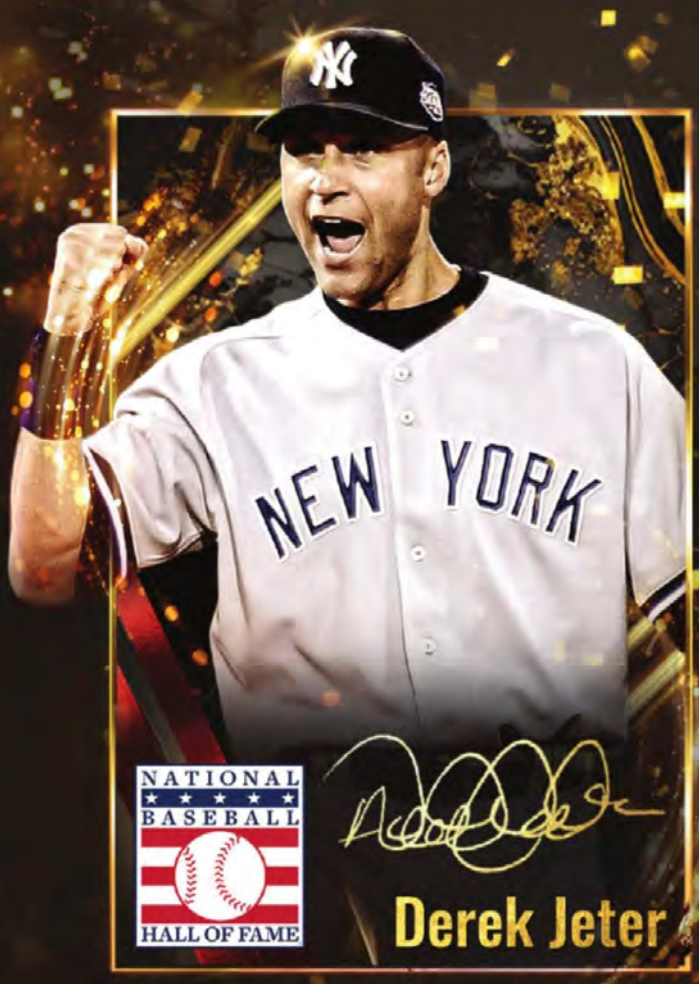

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TORONTO BLUE JAYS

‘FOR THE GOOD OF THE TEAM’

BLUE JAYS’ PATH BACK TO THE POSTSEASON IS PAVED BY UNITY AND A SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE LITTLE THINGS

Take a second to peek at the Blue Jays’ dugout right after a home run. Chances are you’ll find everyone on their feet, banging on the ledge, jumping up and down, laughing and clapping as their teammate rounds the bases. From the top of the stairs, someone will have the Home Run Jacket ready, draping it over today’s hero after he touches home plate.

It doesn’t really matter who hit that home run. Maybe it was Vladimir Guerrero Jr., the face of the franchise who will call Toronto his home for the next 14 years. Maybe it was George Springer, the 35-year-old in the midst of an improbable career renaissance. Perhaps it was Nathan Lukes, Myles Straw, Ernie Clement, or any of the several contributors in a lineup that emerged as one of the most well-rounded units in the game. There’s no shortage of heroes on this team. That’s a huge reason why they’re back in the postseason.

“Everybody loves each other,” Springer said earlier in the year. “I know it’s really a cliché, but I feel like everybody’s very selfless. Everything is done for the good of the team. That’s whether you give yourself up and get somebody to third so somebody can get the hit, or whatever the case. That goes a long way in the clubhouse.”

You’ll hear that sentiment echoed in all corners of the Blue Jays’ clubhouse. This is a club built on unity and soundness, and the knowledge that the ultimate goal can only be achieved if everyone plays for each other. That’s how Toronto became one of the best stories in Major League Baseball this season, overcoming a frustrating 2024 to climb all the way back to the playoffs as the team to beat in the American League. But maybe it shouldn’t be that shocking

to see the Blue Jays bounce back the way they did – and do so with much of the same cast from recent years. They're the comeback kids.

Their biggest comeback is the season as a whole.

"It feels different," Clement said after coming up clutch in a come-from-behind win. "We're never out of the game. It's so much fun to play for a team where that's the feeling. Our pitchers are amazing, so if we can scratch some runs across, we're going to win a lot of ballgames…even when you're down five, six runs early, you can always come back. It's a really special group."

The special qualities of this group were built like everything else they've done this year: one day at a time. It started long before Opening Day, too. With the addition of guys like Andrés Giménez, Jeff Hoffman, and future Hall of Famer Max Scherzer, the Blue Jays' roster started to shape up. Shortly ahead of the start of the regular season, catcher Alejandro Kirk agreed to a five-year contract extension. In early April, Vladimir Guerrero Jr. signed an extension of his own, a 14-year deal that went down as the largest contract in franchise history.

"I was born here, you know?" Guerrero said in his contract announcement back in April. "This is my second home. I spend a lot of time here in Toronto, and in Canada. When the country gives you love, you gotta give the love back. That's what I'm doing now, giving them all the love they give me."

That love is also felt by Vladdy's teammates, newcomers, and longtime friends alike.

As new faces joined the Blue Jays' group of returning players, a new identity emerged – led in large part by new hitting coach David Popkins, along with assistant coaches Lou Iannotti and Hunter Mense.

"It's nine versus one every day," said John Schneider, a strong

TORONTO BLUE JAYS

candidate for the AL Manager of the Year Award this season.

The messaging changed from "make good swing decisions" to "find a pitch you know you can drive." Rather than trying to get their hitters to fit into a mold, the Blue Jays empowered them to trust their strengths. In doing so, they became one of the peskiest teams in the league. The Blue Jays' strikeout rates were the lowest in the league for the majority of the season, and while it took a bit for the power to show up, these hitters remained focused on the process rather than the results, trusting that things would fall into place in due time.

Fall into place they did. When the homers and doubles started to come – aided by big seasons from Springer, Bichette and Daulton Varsho – this offense started to look like the well-rounded unit everyone had envisioned. There was small ball mixed into the big game-winning blows, each game presenting an opportunity to come through in a different way.

The pitching staff worked to hold up its end of the bargain, too. A steady and veteran rotation led by Kevin Gausman, Chris Bassitt, and José Berríos had plenty to gain from the additions of Scherzer and Shane Bieber, the former AL Cy Young winner who joined the Blue Jays at the Trade Deadline in the final stages of his recovery from Tommy John surgery.

"You can allow yourself to get pretty excited when you're adding a guy of that caliber," said Schneider. "Once you get to know him, he's the definition of a pro. He fits right in with the guys that we have already in our rotation. He's really, really smart. He understands what he's good at and what he's trying to do. He's confident right now."

Now take another peek at the dugout. Chances are you'll find two or more of these starters sitting together, talking ball, watching attentively as another pitch is thrown from the mound. That's part of what made Bieber such a seamless fit within that group. In the bullpen, with the likes of Jeff Hoffman, Yariel Rodríguez, Seranthony Domínguez, Eric Lauer, and Brendon Little, you'll see a similar scene. When the Blue Jays say it takes everyone – and everyone pulling in the same direction – this is what they mean. It's more than diligence and selflessness. It's a complete buy-in that goes beyond the active roster.

"That's one of the cool things about this team in general, is that it's not cliquey," said Lauer, who contributed in a variety of roles throughout the regular season. "It's not the starting rotation, the bullpen, the hitters, the outfielders, the infielders. Everybody's very cohesive and just together. We're all friends. There's nobody who's an outlier, which is cool."

Every bit of that cohesiveness was necessary in a division as tough as the AL East, where even the teams with a losing record pose a

significant threat on any given night. As the Blue Jays built their rhythm, their confidence shot up and the wins started piling on. Something shifted at the ballpark too, spreading all the way through the city of Toronto and beyond. That special feeling that was born in the clubhouse was now felt by an entire country.

"Everybody in here has a job to do, and everybody in here loves to do what they're doing," said Springer. "For me, nobody is above the team…I know this team has kind of embraced each other, embraced the city, the fan group. Everybody wants to give the fans something to be proud of. That starts in the locker room."

There was plenty to be proud of from March to September, and there's much more to come in this fabled campaign. All season long, the Blue Jays lived in the moment. Now comes the biggest moment of all.

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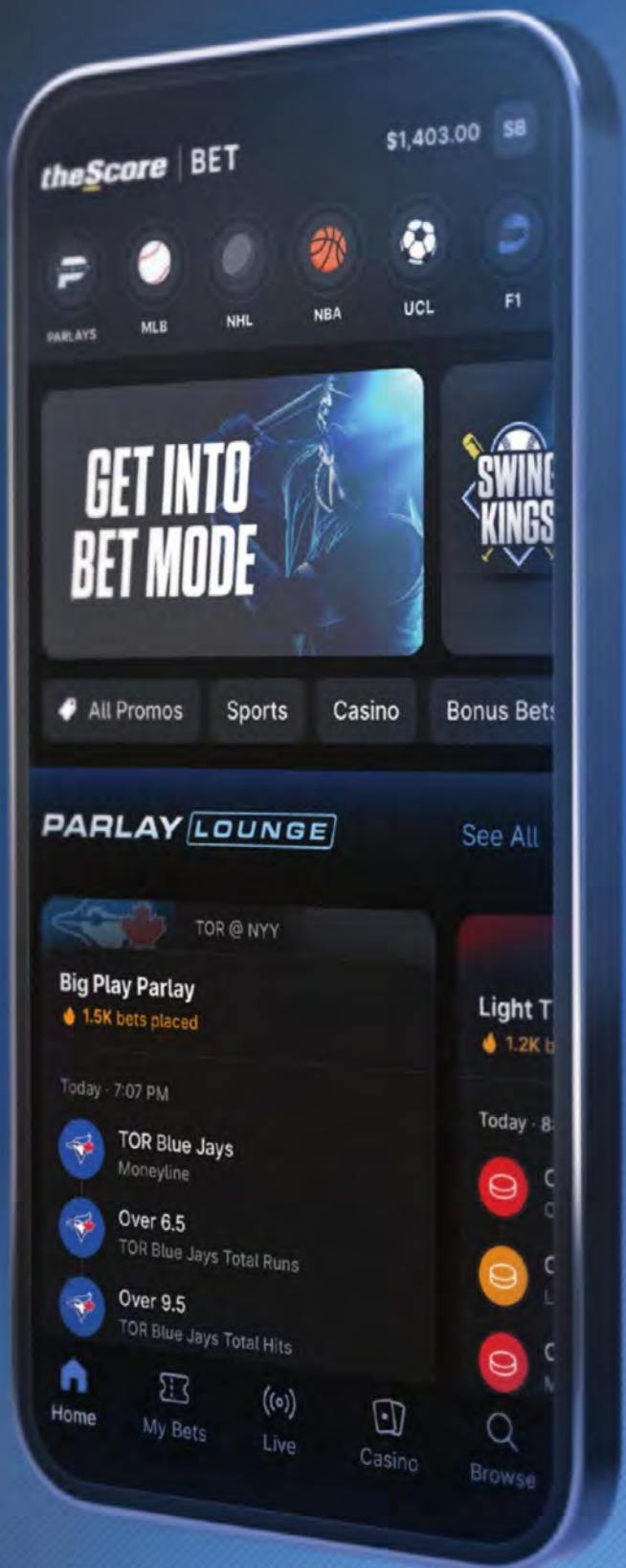

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THE LEGEND CALLS IT

CLAYTON KERSHAW ANNOUNCED THIS SEASON IS HIS LAST; HE INTENDS TO END IT WITH A WIN

BY CARY OSBORNE

In the hour leading up to Clayton Kershaw's retirement speech on Sept. 18, he hit baseballs and played catch with his son Charley on the field at Dodger Stadium. Charley later also sat with him on the field as they both watched Dodger pitchers run through drills.

It was a picture of post-retirement Clayton Kershaw — husband and father of four (or 4 1/2, as he put it, with his wife Ellen expecting baby No. 5).

In a press conference later that day at Dodger Stadium, Kershaw announced that he would retire at the end of the 2025 season.

"I'm really not sad," Kershaw said. "I'm really not. I'm really at peace with this. It's just emotional, and I've tried to hold it together."

But within the emotion was the fire for one of the Dodgers' all-time competitors — the picture of pre-retirement Clayton Kershaw.

Kershaw's announcement was purposeful.

"The last thing I want to do is be a distraction to anybody for accomplishing our ultimate goal — to win in the last game of the season," Kershaw said. "So we're going to get through this today, and then we're going to go win the rest of the games and be good."

The announcement was made the day before his final regular-season start at Dodger Stadium. The competitor showed out again.

"I anticipate pitching good," Kershaw said. "This game matters for both teams. Everybody's still in it. We've got to win these games, so it's good to get this out of the way today. It'll be heightened, I'm sure. But I got a job to do, so I need to go out there and do my job. And thankfully, I'll have that to distract me."

CLAYTON KERSHAW ANNOUNCED HE WILL RETIRE AT THE END OF THE 2025 SEASON ON SEPT. 18. KERSHAW PLAYED 18 MAJOR LEAGUE SEASONS.

Though Kershaw's start against San Francisco on Sept. 19 might not have seemed according to script, it actually was. There was an optimistic introduction, conflict, tension and, finally, resolution and an emotional ending.

Kershaw allowed a leadoff home run to Giants left fielder Heliot Ramos. The Giants had two runners on base in the first, second and third innings. His pitch count climbed.

Wilmer Flores' single in the third inning scored a run, and the Dodgers trailed 2–1. But Kershaw minimized the damage.

Kershaw struck out San Francisco's two most potent hitters in succession — Willy Adames to end the fourth and Rafael Devers to begin the fifth inning.

His night was done after 4 1/3 innings.

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"Obviously, it was a little harder than I wanted it to be," Kershaw said. "I was grinding out there, working way too hard to get people out. But thankful that I made it through when I did and kept us in the game a little bit."

The Dodgers eventually came back to win 6-3 and clinched a spot in the postseason for the 13th consecutive season.

"I wouldn't change it," Kershaw said. "Perfect night. It really was."

Kershaw is a player who lifted a franchise from contender to champion, a 20-year-old prodigy who grew up to be a 37-year-old living legend.

He is revered in baseball.

"I got to play against him for 12 years, and every time you step in the box against him, it was not fun," said first baseman Freddie Freeman. "You knew it was going to be a tough night at the yard. And then you come here and see the daily work ethic. What he does on and off the field, in the community — not only in Los Angeles but Dallas, all over the place, all over the world."

He is revered by teammates.

"(Throughout his career), he would take the ball when it was his turn. He would also take the ball when it wasn't his turn. He would come out of the pen, do anything the team asked of him," said third baseman Max Muncy. "He never said no. He never said my arm hurts. He never said I need a little bit more time. It was whatever this team needed to get over the hump. You're talking about one of the greatest pitchers of all time, and for him to be that unselfish is pretty ridiculous."

KERSHAW BECAME THE 20TH MEMBER OF THE 3,000 STRIKEOUT CLUB THIS SEASON.

KERSHAW SALUTED A SELLOUT CROWD AT DODGER STADIUM ON SEPT. 19 IN WHAT WAS HIS FINAL REGULAR SEASON START AT THE BALLPARK.

(TOP) SUE JO/LOS ANGELES DODGERS; (BOTTOM) JON SOOHOO/LOS ANGELES DODGERS

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He is revered at Dodger Stadium.

The fans let him know that on Sept. 19. Before he threw in the bullpen, when starting lineups were announced, before he threw his first pitch in the first inning, and after he threw his final pitch in the fifth inning, he received a standing ovation from the sellout crowd at Dodger Stadium.

"Dodger Stadium is a super special place, and the fans are the main reason why," Kershaw said. "They continue to come out and support us and be here. Every night, it's 50,000 people. I wish I had better words other than I'm just so honored and thankful to hear those ovations, and I'll never take that for granted."

Kershaw will retire as the only pitcher in the Modern Era (since 1900) to win at least 200 games and lose fewer than 100 games.

He owns the lowest ERA of the Live Ball Era (since 1920, minimum 100 starts).

Kershaw became the 20th member of the 3,000 Strikeout Club on July 2. He is the Dodger all-time leader in strikeouts.

He is a three-time National League Cy Young Award winner (2011, 2013, 2014), the 2014 NL MVP, the 2012 Roberto Clemente Award honoree and a two-time World Series champion (2020, 2024).

Of all the accomplishments in 18 Major League seasons, there's one thing that has always driven him. It's something that he still has time to be part of.

"Winning is always my favorite thing," he said.

KERSHAW'S LAST PITCH ON SEPT. 19 WAS A STRIKEOUT OF SAN FRANCISCO'S RAFAEL DEVERS.

KERSHAW IS A THREE-TIME CY YOUNG AWARD WINNER, THE 2014 NL MVP, THE 2012 ROBERTO CLEMENTE AWARD HONOREE AND A TWO-TIME WORLD SERIES CHAMPION.

(TOP) CARRIE GIORDANO/LOS ANGELES DODGERS; (BOTTOM) KATE FOULTZ/LOS ANGELES DODGERS

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THE ONE AND ONLY OHTANI

SHOHEI OHTANI FOLLOWED UP AN AMAZING 2024 WITH AN ASTONISHING 2025

BY CARY OSBORNE

Wearing his Dodger road grays and with his two hands raised, Shohei Ohtani created one of the most iconic images of his career.

Ohtani had just hit his 50th home run of the season on Sept. 19, 2024, in Miami in a 6-for-6 game. He also stole his 50th base of the season earlier that afternoon.

It took the eighth-oldest team in Major League Baseball 135 seasons to have its first 50-home-run hitter. The Dodgers didn't have to wait long for their second.

Ohtani hit his 50th home run of the 2025 season on Sept. 16 — the same game in which he no-hit the Philadelphia Phillies for five innings as a pitcher. And on Sept. 28, in the last game of the regular season, he hit his 55th home run, breaking the franchise record he established in 2024 of 54.

Ohtani's first two seasons in Dodger blue have been remarkable.

And as he plays out his career and redefines excellence, he has gone beyond comparisons and made himself singular — even as comparisons to Babe Ruth, baseball's ultimate compliment, persist.

Ruth switched teams from the Red Sox to the Yankees for the 1920 season, and he created the 50 Home Run Club with 54 homers. Then he hit 59 in 1921.

JON SOOHOO/LOS ANGELES DODGERS

SHOHEI OHTANI SET A NEW DODGER FRANCHISE RECORD IN 2025 WITH 55 HOME RUNS.

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Ohtani switched clubs from the Angels to the Dodgers in 2024, and he hit 54 home runs. He followed that up by becoming the sixth different Major Leaguer with consecutive 50-home run seasons. He became the first Dodger with consecutive 50-home run seasons and the first Major Leaguer since Alex Rodriguez in 2001 and 2002.

But Ruth was no longer a pitcher when he moved over to the Yankees. He made five pitching appearances for New York in 15 years.

This year has seen a resumption of Ohtani the two-way anomaly — game-changing designated hitter and elite starting pitcher.

Ohtani, who started 86 games with the Angels from 2018-2023, didn't pitch at all in 2024 after right elbow surgery in September 2023. He had left shoulder surgery in November 2024 after tearing his labrum in the World Series.

That makes what he has accomplished in 2025 even more astonishing.

"He's just had an incredible run in a short period of time," said manager Dave Roberts.

The season after Ohtani created the 50/50 Club with 54 homers and 59 stolen bases and was the unanimous National League MVP, the 31-year-old was the NL MVP favorite late into the 2025 regular season.

After almost two years away from pitching in a Major League game, Ohtani returned to the mound and once again touched 100 mph with regularity. He made 14 starts and struck out 62 batters in 47 innings. Ohtani had a 2.87 ERA. He allowed no runs over his last three starts of the season.

OHTANI CELEBRATES AFTER HITTING HIS 50TH HOME RUN OF THE 2024 SEASON ON SEPT. 19, 2024 IN MIAMI.

OHTANI STARTED 14 GAMES IN 2025 AND HAD A 2.87 ERA IN 47 INNINGS.

(TOP) JON SOOHOO/LOS ANGELES DODGERS. (BOTTOM) JUAN OCAMPO/LOS ANGELES DODGERS

He is the first player in Major League history with at least 50 pitching strikeouts and 50 home runs in the same season — a new 50/50 club.

But remove from the equation the fact that he is pitching again. If it were just Ohtani the hitter, he would follow arguably the greatest season ever by a Dodger hitter with one of the greatest seasons ever by a Dodger hitter. He ended the 2025 regular season leading the Major Leagues in runs and total bases and leading the National League in slugging percentage, OPS, OPS+ and wins above replacement.

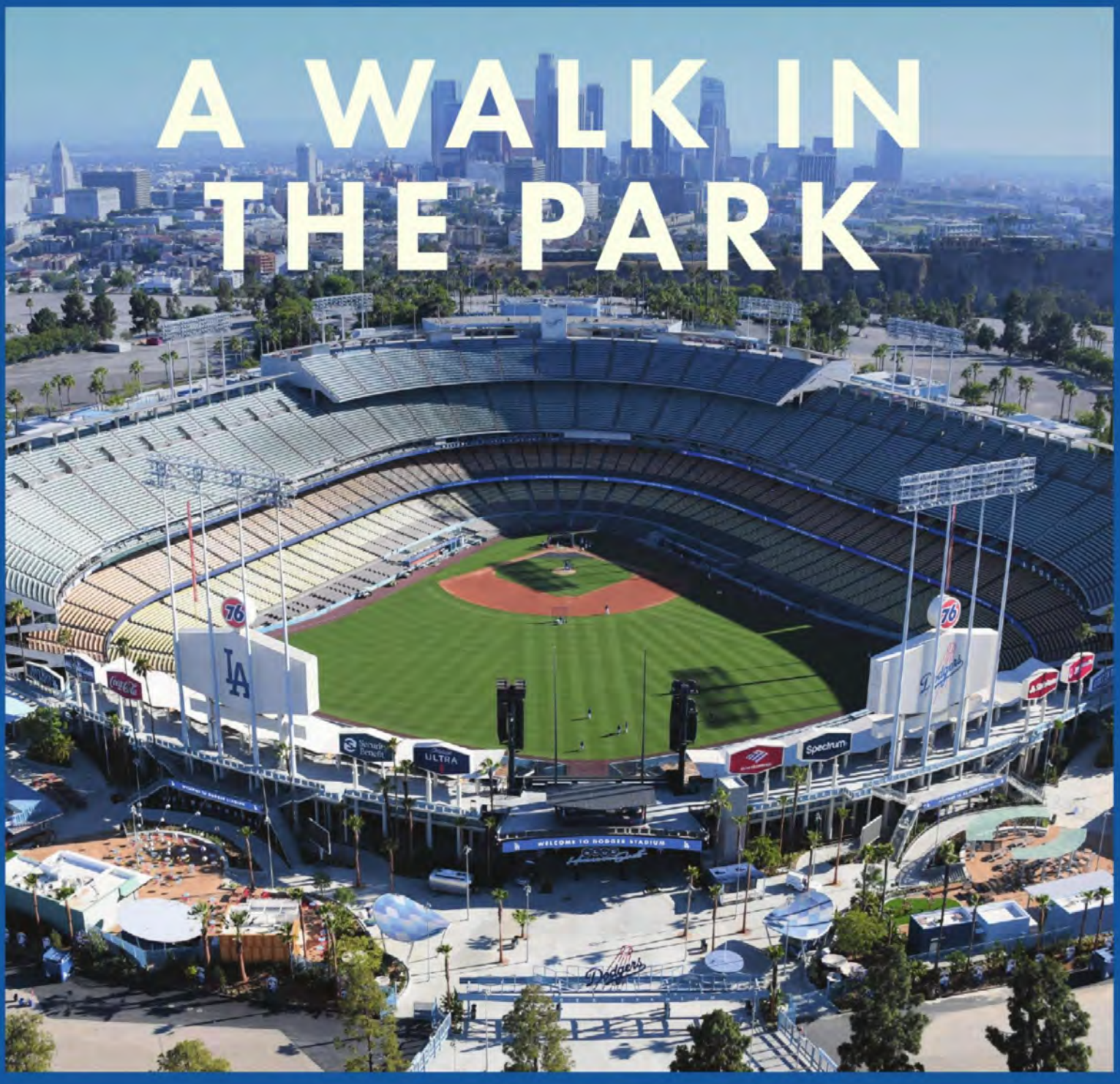
But he is pitching, making this an unprecedented season in Dodger history.

OHTANI'S 2025 REGULAR SEASON BEGAN IN THE TOKYO SERIES. HE HIT A HOME RUN ON MARCH 19 IN THE TOKYO DOME AGAINST THE CHICAGO CUBS.

OHTANI IS THE ONLY DODGER TO HIT 50 HOME RUNS IN A SEASON. HE'S DONE IT TWICE — IN 2024 AND 2025.

(TOP) JON SOOHOO/LOS ANGELES DODGERS. (BOTTOM) CARRIE GIORDANO/LOS ANGELES DODGERS

A WALK IN THE PARK



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"I think in totality it's a better season," said Roberts, comparing 2024 and 2025.

The two most common sources for comments about Ohtani since he has become a Dodger are Ohtani himself and Roberts — who, in addition to all his other roles, takes on the job as spokesperson for all on-field activities.

In 2024, questions were posed to them with a tone of amazement. This year brought a shift. Being that Ohtani resumed pitching and his early summer offensive numbers weren't to last year's levels in some areas, the tone shifted to doubt.

Should Shohei Ohtani move out of the leadoff spot in games he pitches?

He batted second on July 21 and July 30. Afterward, he was back in the leadoff spot.

Should Shohei Ohtani get a day off?

He got one on Aug. 21 in Colorado after pitching the night before. But that was an exception, not the rule.

Is the pitching impacting the hitting?

Ohtani's first start this season was June 16, with one inning in a start against San Diego.

While it's true that Ohtani's .204 batting average in July was his lowest month average since August 2021 (.202), his nine home runs tied for sixth in the Majors, his 18 runs scored ranked tied for third in the National League, and his 19 RBI ranked fifth. Meanwhile, he made four starts and struck out 14 batters while allowing three earned runs in 11 innings (2.45 ERA).

Ohtani's first start on the mound in August produced the package of eight strikeouts in four innings and a home run in the batter's box.

OHTANI THREW FIVE NO-HIT INNINGS AGAINST THE PHILLIES ON SEPT. 16.

OHTANI IS A FIVE-TIME ALL-STAR AND THREE-TIME MVP.

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His next time on the bump, he became the first starting pitcher since at least 1900 to hit a leadoff triple. He then struck out two batters in the first inning.

From June 16 till the end of the season, he had a .996 OPS and 30 home runs in 88 games.

As Roberts had often said, which further answers all the questions, the best option when Ohtani pitches is that Ohtani bats.

And ultimately, it's Ohtani who wants to be in there.

"He wants to win," Roberts said. "Him playing every day and pitching, him taking walks when needed, him switching spots with Mookie (Betts) in the order — whatever's in the best interest of the ballclub, that's what he's done. He's not a vocal leader but I think the way he plays is certainly a message to everybody. But that's something he pretty much does every day."

But there is something he has never done.

Until this year, he had not pitched in critical September games for a team in a divisional race. And what sets this season apart even more is Ohtani pitching in the postseason.

After six Major League seasons with the Angels, he reached the postseason for the first time in his career in 2024 with the Dodgers. Questions were asked last season around this time — *Is Shohei Ohtani an option to pitch in the 2024 postseason?*

No.

Now, the Dodgers' plan in 2025 is for him to become the first two-way impact player in Major League postseason history.

OHTANI HIT HIS 50TH HOME RUN OF THE SEASON ON SEPT. 16.

OHTANI AND TEAMMATE YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO HAVE REACHED THE POSTSEASON IN EACH OF THEIR TWO SEASONS WITH THE LOS ANGELES DODGERS.

JON SOOHOO/LOS ANGELES DODGERS

World Series 2025 Capital One

BLUE JAYS

ELSA/GETTY IMAGES

JOHN SCHNEIDER
MANAGER

MICHAEL CHISHOLM/MLB PHOTOS

ADDISON BARGER
INFIELD

MATT FREED/AP

CHRIS BASSITT
PITCHER

ABDOUL SOW/MLB PHOTOS

SHANE BIEBER
PITCHER

MICHAEL CHISHOLM/MLB PHOTOS

ERNIE CLEMENT
INFIELD

STEPHANIE SCARBROUGH/AP

SERANTHONY DOMÍNGUEZ
PITCHER

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BLUE JAYS

MONICA BRADBURN/MLB PHOTOS

BRAYDON FISHER
PITCHER

MOLLIE HANDKINS/MLB PHOTOS

MASON FLUHARTY
PITCHER

ALIZA CHAMBERS/MLB PHOTOS

KEVIN GAUSMAN
PITCHER

THOMAS SKRLJ/MLB PHOTOS

ANDRÉS GIMÉNEZ
INFIELD

MONICA BRADBURN/MLB PHOTOS

VLADIMIR GUERRERO JR.
INFIELD

JIM MCISAAC/GETTY IMAGES

TYLER HEINEMAN
CATCHER

DANIEL SHIREY/MLB PHOTOS

JEFF HOFFMAN
PITCHER

JIM MCISAAC/GETTY IMAGES

ISIAH KINER-FALEFA
INFIELD

MICHAEL CHISHOLM/MLB PHOTOS

ALEJANDRO KIRK
CATCHER

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BLUE JAYS

MICHAEL CHISHOLM/MLB PHOTOS

ERIC LAUER
PITCHER

RONALD MARTINEZ/GETTY IMAGES

BRENDON LITTLE
PITCHER

JOEY LOPERFIDO
OUTFIELD

THOMAS SKRLJ/MLB PHOTOS

NATHAN LUKES
OUTFIELD

ROD MAR/MLB PHOTOS

YARIEL RODRÍGUEZ
PITCHER

THOMAS SKRLJ/MLB PHOTO

MAX SCHERZER
PITCHER

GINNIE COLEMAN/GETTY IMAGES

DAVIS SCHNEIDER
INFIELD

ABBIE SOW/MLB PHOTOS

GEORGE SPRINGER
OUTFIELD

MICHAEL CHISHOLM/MLB PHOTOS

MYLES STRAW
OUTFIELD

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BLUE JAYS

VAUGHN RIDLEY/GETTY IMAGES

LOUIS VARLAND
PITCHER

VAUGHN RIDLEY/GETTY IMAGES

DAULTON VARSHO
OUTFIELD

CHRIS YOUNG/CANADIAN PRESS/AP

TREY YESAVAGE
PITCHER

WORLD SERIES UMPIRES

WILL LITTLE

MARK WEGNER*

JOHN TUMPANE

ALAN PORTER

ADAM HAMARI

JORDAN BAKER

ADRIAN JOHNSON

DAN IASSOGNA

JEREMIE REHAK

CAITLIN O'HARA/MLB PHOTOS

*CREW CHIEF

TORONTO BLUE JAYS COACHES

MIKE CARLSON/MLB PHOTOS

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FIRST BASE COACH

CARLOS FEBLES
THIRD BASE COACH

DEMARLO HALE
ASSOCIATE MANAGER

GRAHAM JOHNSON
BULLPEN COACH

LOU IANNOTTI
ASSISTANT HITTING COACH

DON MATTINGLY
BENCH COACH

DAVID POPKINS
HITTING COACH

PETE WALKER
PITCHING COACH

Roster subject to change

World Series 2025 Capital One

BLUE JAYS

NO.	PLAYER	B/T	W	L	ERA	SO	BB	SV	BIRTHDATE	BIRTHPLACE
PITCHERS										
40	Chris Bassitt	R/R	11	9	3.96	166	52	0	02/22/1989	Toledo, OH
57	Shane Bieber	R/R	4	2	3.57	37	7	0	05/31/1995	Orange, CA
48	Seranthony Domínguez	R/R	4	4	3.16	79	36	2	11/25/1994	Esperanza, D.R.
63	Braydon Fisher	R/R	7	0	2.70	62	19	0	07/26/2000	League City, TX
68	Mason Fluharty	R/L	5	2	4.44	56	24	1	08/13/2001	Lewes, DE
34	Kevin Gausman	L/R	10	11	3.59	189	50	0	01/06/1991	Centennial, CO
23	Jeff Hoffman	R/R	9	7	4.37	84	27	33	01/08/1993	Latham, NY
56	Eric Lauer	R/L	9	2	3.18	102	26	0	06/03/1995	Elyria, OH
54	Brendon Little	L/L	4	2	3.03	91	45	1	08/11/1996	Bryn Mawr, PA
29	Yariel Rodríguez	R/R	2	2	3.08	66	34	2	03/10/1997	Camaguey, Cuba
31	Max Scherzer	R/R	5	5	5.19	82	23	0	07/27/1984	St. Louis, MO
77	Louis Varland	L/R	4	3	2.97	75	22	0	12/09/1997	St. Paul, MN
39	Trey Yesavage	R/R	1	0	3.21	16	7	0	07/28/2003	Pottstown, PA

NO.	PLAYER	B/T	AB	H	AVG	HR	RBI	OPS	BIRTHDATE	BIRTHPLACE
CATCHERS										
55	Tyler Heineman	S/R	149	43	.289	3	20	.777	06/19/1991	Pacific Palisades, CA
30	Alejandro Kirk	R/R	451	127	.282	15	76	.769	11/06/1998	Tijuana, Mexico
INFIELDERS										
47	Addison Barger	L/R	460	112	.243	21	74	.755	11/12/1999	Bellevue, WA
22	Ernie Clement	R/R	545	151	.277	9	50	.711	03/22/1996	Rochester, NY
0	Andrés Giménez	L/R	329	69	.210	7	35	.598	09/04/1998	Barquisimeto, Venez.
27	Vladimir Guerrero Jr.	R/R	589	172	.292	23	84	.848	03/16/1999	Montreal, QC, Canada
7	Isiah Kiner-Falefa	R/R	431	113	.262	2	40	.631	03/23/1995	Honolulu, HI
OUTFIELDERS										
10	Joey Loperfido	L/R	96	32	.333	4	14	.879	05/11/1999	Philadelphia, PA
38	Nathan Lukes	L/R	388	99	.255	12	65	.730	07/12/1994	Sacramento, CA
36	Davis Schneider	R/R	188	44	.234	11	31	.797	01/26/1999	Berlin, NJ
4	George Springer	R/R	498	154	.309	32	84	.959	09/19/1989	New Britain, CT
3	Myles Straw	R/R	267	70	.262	4	32	.680	10/17/1994	Garden Grove, CA
5	Daulton Varsho	L/R	248	59	.238	20	55	.832	07/02/1996	Marshfield, WI

Manager: John Schneider (14). Coaches: Mark Budzinski (53), Carlos Febles (51), DeMarlo Hale (15), Graham Johnson (82), Lou Iannotti (80), Don Mattingly (46), David Popkins (79), Pete Walker (41).

Roster subject to change

A LONG TIME COMING

In Game 5 of the American League Division Series against the Tigers, the Mariners staved off elimination thanks to a walk-off single off the bat of Jorge Polanco. The epic 15-inning marathon — the longest winner-take-all game in postseason history — vaulted Seattle into the League Championship Series, where the Blue Jays awaited.

The stakes were high, especially for two franchises starved for a World Series berth. The Blue Jays had not made the Fall Classic since 1993, when they won their second of back-to-back championships. On the other hand, the Mariners had never even won the pennant. For both of these fanbases, it was a long time coming.

But a large portion of each would be lying if they said they foresaw their team being just one series away from the World Series at points throughout the 2025 season.

On July 10, the Seattle bullpen blew a five-run lead for a 6-5, 10-inning loss to the Yankees at Yankee Stadium to cap off a three-game sweep. With that loss, Seattle was just 48-45 and seven games back in the AL West. What followed was a five-game win streak, and Seattle went 42-27 the remainder of the year, including winning 17 of the last 21 on their way to their first division title since 2001.

The Blue Jays, meanwhile, found themselves in a deep hole very early. After losing to the Rangers on May 27, Toronto was already eight games behind, two games under .500, and in third place in the AL East. Just 32 games later, the Jays had completely erased that eight-game deficit and pulled themselves into a tie atop the division. The next day, they would officially take over sole control of first place when they finished off a four-game sweep of the Yankees at Rogers Centre on July 3, the first four of what turned into a 10-game winning streak. They would never relinquish their grasp on first for the remainder of the year, winning the AL East for the first time since 2015.

With the Mariners dramatics in the ALDS and the Blue Jays relatively simple dispatch of the Yankees, the AL's top two teams were set for battle in the ALCS. Two nights after Polanco punched their ticket into the next round, the Mariners dug deep to find more late magic, shrugging off a cross-country flight

ALIKA JENNER/GETTY IMAGES (SCHERZER); DANIEL SHIREY/MLB PHOTOS

POSTSEASON RECAP

and their weary bullpen to stun the Blue Jays in Game 1 of the ALCS.

Cal Raleigh launched a game-tying homer in the sixth and Polanco ripped a pair of run-scoring singles, silencing a raucous Rogers Centre crowd and lifting Seattle to a 3-1 victory.

Bryce Miller delivered a gritty six-inning outing on short rest — and Seattle's hunt for its first World Series appearance was gathering real momentum.

The Mariners were supposed to be the team dragging, forced to grind out an extra-inning epic just for the privilege of flying across the country and taking on the Blue Jays.

Instead, they seized control, shrugging off every perceived disadvantage to carry a commanding lead back home. Julio Rodríguez and Polanco each hit three-run homers and Josh Naylor added a two-run shot as Seattle cruised to a 10-3 victory in Game 2, placing the franchise two wins from that first World Series.

When your back is against the wall, there's only one way out: Start throwing punches.

That's how the Blue Jays viewed their situation ahead of Game 3 — and they did exactly that, answering the noise and electricity of the Emerald City with a thunderous performance of their own.

Andrés Giménez sparked a five-run third inning with the first of five Toronto home runs as the Blue Jays displayed the power and perseverance that have defined their season, swinging big in a 13-4 victory at T-Mobile Park.

"It definitely changed the momentum," Vladimir Guerrero Jr. said through an interpreter.

GUERRERO

DANIEL SHIREY/MLB PHOTOS

Max Scherzer shone in a vintage performance while Giménez homered and drove in four runs, silencing the crowd for a second consecutive evening in the Blue Jays' 8-2 victory in Game 4.

Toronto's win continued the trend of road teams winning each matchup, ensuring this series will return to Canada with everything still up for grabs.

"You're in the biggest moment of the season right now," Scherzer said. "These games are must-win, every single one of them. When you get success, it's great. This is what you play for."

Making the 500th start of his career (regular season and postseason combined), Scherzer rolled back the clock, showcasing his fiery, hard-driving "Mad Max" persona at a time when his team needed it most.

The Mariners took Game 5, 6-2, behind a dramatic grand slam by Eugenio Suárez, but the Blue Jays won Game 6 by the same 6-2 score. Rookie hurler Trey Yesavage, who began the season at low-A ball and started just three regular-season MLB games, carried a shutout into the sixth inning. Another homer and more stellar defense from other-worldly Guerrero helped the Jays force Game 7, which they won at home to punch their ticket to their first Fall Classic since 1993. *—Bryan Hoch*

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PITCHER

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MOOKIE BETTS
INFIELD

GENEVA HEFFERNAN/MLB PHOTOS

ALEX CALL
OUTFIELD

TOM WILSON/MLB PHOTOS

BEN CASPARIUS
PITCHER

HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

JUSTIN DEAN
OUTFIELD

Roster subject to change

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DODGERS

NORM HALL/MLB PHOTOS

JACK DREYER
PITCHER

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TOMMY EDMAN
INFIELD

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FREDDIE FREEMAN
INFIELD

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PITCHER

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INFIELD

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TEOSCAR HERNÁNDEZ
OUTFIELD

KATELYN MULCAHY/MLB PHOTOS

CLAYTON KERSHAW
PITCHER

TOM WILSON/MLB PHOTOS

HYESEONG KIM
INFIELD

ROB LEITER/MLB PHOTOS

MAX MUNCY
INFIELD

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DODGERS

NICOLE VASQUEZ/MLB PHOTOS

SHOHEI OHTANI
TWO-WAY PLAYER

KATELYN MULCAHY/MLB PHOTOS

ANDY PAGES
OUTFIELD

ROB LEITER/MLB PHOTOS

MIGUEL ROJAS
INFIELD

LUKE HALES/GETTY IMAGES

BEN RORTVEDT
CATCHER

KATELYN MULCAHY/MLB PHOTOS

ROKI SASAKI
PITCHER

NICOLE VASQUEZ/MLB PHOTOS

EMMET SHEEHAN
PITCHER

DANIEL SHIREY/MLB PHOTOS

WILL SMITH
CATCHER

NICOLE VASQUEZ/MLB PHOTOS

BLAKE SNELL
PITCHER

ALYSSA HOWELL/MLB PHOTOS

BLAKE TREINEN
PITCHER

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DODGERS

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ALEX VESIA
PITCHER

TOM WILSON/MLB PHOTOS

JUSTIN WROBLESKI
PITCHER

ABDOUL SOW/MLB PHOTOS

YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO
PITCHER

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BULLPEN COACH

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BRANDON McDANIEL
COACH

CONNOR McGUINESS
ASST. PITCHING COACH

MARK PRIOR
PITCHING COACH

ROBERT VAN SCOYOC
HITTING COACH

CHRIS WOODWARD
FIRST BASE COACH

Roster subject to change

DODGERS

NO.	PLAYER	B/T	W	L	ERA	SO	BB	SV	BIRTHDATE	BIRTHPLACE
PITCHERS										
43	Anthony Banda	L/L	5	1	3.18	61	34	0	08/10/1993	Corpus Christi, TX
78	Ben Casparius	R/R	7	5	4.64	71	21	2	02/11/1999	Westport, CT
86	Jack Dreyer	R/L	3	2	2.95	74	24	4	02/27/1999	Salt Lake City, UT
31	Tyler Glasnow	L/R	4	3	3.19	106	43	0	08/23/1993	Newhall, CA
22	Clayton Kershaw	L/L	11	2	3.36	84	35	0	03/19/1988	Dallas, TX
17	Shohei Ohtani	L/R	1	1	2.87	62	9	0	07/05/1994	Oshu, Japan
11	Roki Sasaki	R/R	1	1	4.46	28	22	0	11/03/2001	Rikuzentakata, Japan
80	Emmet Sheehan	R/R	6	3	2.82	89	22	0	11/15/1999	New York, NY
7	Blake Snell	L/L	5	4	2.35	72	26	0	12/04/1992	Seattle, WA
49	Blake Treinen	R/R	2	7	5.40	36	19	2	06/30/1988	Wichita, KS
51	Alex Vesia	L/L	4	2	3.02	80	22	5	04/11/1996	Alpine, CA
70	Justin Wrobleski	L/L	5	5	4.32	76	17	2	07/14/2000	Hoffman Estates, IL
18	Yoshinobu Yamamoto	R/R	12	8	2.49	201	59	0	08/17/1998	Bizen, Japan

NO.	PLAYER	B/T	AB	H	AVG	HR	RBI	OPS	BIRTHDATE	BIRTHPLACE
CATCHERS										
47	Ben Rortvedt	L/R	112	17	.152	1	10	.445	09/25/1997	Madison, WI
16	Will Smith	R/R	362	107	.296	17	61	.901	03/28/1995	Louisville, KY
INFIELDERS										
50	Mookie Betts	R/R	589	152	.258	20	82	.732	10/07/1992	Nashville, TN
25	Tommy Edman	S/R	346	78	.225	13	49	.656	05/09/1995	Pontiac, MI
5	Freddie Freeman	L/R	556	164	.295	24	90	.869	09/12/1989	Villa Park, CA
8	Enrique Hernández	R/R	232	47	.203	10	35	.621	08/24/1991	San Juan, P.R.
6	Hyeseong Kim	L/R	161	45	.280	3	17	.699	01/27/1999	Goyang, Republic of Korea
13	Max Muncy	L/R	313	76	.243	19	67	.846	08/25/1990	Midland, TX
72	Miguel Rojas	R/R	290	76	.262	7	27	.715	02/24/1989	Los Teques, Venez.
OUTFIELDERS										
12	Alex Call	R/R	270	72	.267	5	31	.746	09/27/1994	Burnsville, MN
75	Justin Dean	R/R	2	0	.000	0	0	.000	12/06/1996	Mauldin, SC
37	Teoscar Hernández	R/R	511	126	.247	25	89	.738	10/15/1992	Cotui, D.R.
44	Andy Pages	R/R	581	158	.272	27	86	.774	12/08/2000	Havana, Cuba
DESIGNATED HITTER										
17	Shohei Ohtani	L/R	611	172	.282	55	102	1.014	07/05/1994	Oshu, Japan

Manager: Dave Roberts (30). Coaches: Josh Bard (54), Aaron Bates (98), Dino Ebel (91), Bob Geren (88), Danny Lehmann (0), Brandon McDaniel (89), Connor McGuiness (87), Mark Prior (99), Robert Van Scoyoc (72), Chris Woodward (84).

Roster subject to change

GOING FOR TWO

The Brewers were back in the NLCS, with a familiar opponent looming.

Milwaukee finally got over the hump with a cathartic victory over the Cubs in Game 5 of the National League Division Series. They snapped a streak of six consecutive postseason series losses — a spell that began at the hands of the Dodgers in the 2018 NLCS.

Seven years later, Milwaukee hosted those Dodgers again.

The Brewers were vying for their first pennant since 1982, which also marks the franchise's only appearance in the Fall Classic. They are one of five teams without a World Series championship, a dubious distinction which, of course, the Dodgers don't know much about. L.A. was still humming in its title defense, having won consecutive playoff series to kickstart another deep foray through October.

The start of the Brewers season was not pretty. They started 0-4, and were bashed to the tune of a -32 run differential. They were down 6.5 games in the division as late as June 17, but they then won eight of nine to trim that deficit to two games, and their 11-game win streak in July catapulted them above the Cubs and to the top of the NL Central standings, where they would reside for the remainder of the year. A 14-game win-streak started in August, and it was smooth sailing from there as they won the division for the third year in a row and fourth time in the last five years.

The Dodgers battled through a litany of injuries to emerge atop the NL West for the fourth year in a row and 12th time in the last 13 years. They started their year winning the first two games of the MLB season in Tokyo against the Cubs and rattled off eight straight wins to start their title defense. They never trailed by more than 2.5 games in the NL West. They were a game behind the Padres as late as August 23, but finished the season 15-5 and cruised through the Reds in the Wild Card Series before disposing of the Phillies in four games in the NLDS. With most of their injuries in the rearview mirror, the Dodgers were in as good a spot as any defending champion has been in the last two decades to repeat as World Series champs.

This year's National League Championship Series pitted the defending champs against a Brewers team that not only led the Majors in wins, but that beat the Dodgers six times in six tries during the regular season. And yet, for all the spunk it took for the Brewers to reach this point and for all the moxie they demonstrated throughout NLCS Game 1, it was still the Dodgers who managed a 2-1 victory behind Blake Snell's eight one-hit innings, Freddie Freeman's solo homer in the sixth, and just enough execution at the end.

"Going on the road and taking the first one, it's huge," Freeman said. "You can't understate the importance of that at all."

At a sold-out American Family Field, Snell was cruising. After retiring the first six batters in a row, Snell allowed a leadoff hit in the third inning but promptly erased that runner on a caught stealing. The next 17 Brewers went down in order against the left-hander, who became the first MLB pitcher to face the minimum through eight innings of a postseason contest since Don Larsen in his 1956 perfect game.

"It was a masterpiece tonight," said Freeman.

SNELL

AARON GASH/MLB PHOTOS

POSTSEASON RECAP

OHTANI

ROB LEITER/MLB PHOTOS

For years now, Major League teams have sought creative ways to record 27 outs in October. Managers limit traditional starters to three innings or fewer. They endeavor not to overexpose their arms.

The 2025 Dodgers, though? They're kicking it old school.

This is partly out of necessity, partly by design. No matter the reason, at a time of year when most modern teams zig, the Dodgers — a modern operation if ever there was one — are very much zagging. In Game 2, Yoshinobu Yamamoto twirled a complete game to lead the Dodgers to a 5-1 victory over the Brewers at American Family Field. "If you look at the construction of our roster currently, the strength is starting pitching," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said.

There's something to the idea of playoff experience, Dodgers second baseman Tommy Edman said. For someone taking part in his first postseason series, "it's definitely a lot harder to slow your heartbeat down."

If Edman was ever that type of player, he's not anymore. Neither is Shohei Ohtani or Mookie Betts or Will Smith or Freeman or really anyone who's signed onto this Dodgers juggernaut. To a man, they've been here before. To a man, they've won. The pressure they place on opponents is relentless.

For those reasons, Los Angeles was primed for a return trip to the World Series.

For much of NLCS Game 3 at Dodger Stadium, Brewers rookie Jacob Misiorowski made it a fair fight. He struck out nine. His pitches exploded into the strike zone and darted out of it. But the Dodgers stayed persistent, eventually cracking Misiorowski in the sixth inning and going on to win, 3-1.

The Dodgers' return to the World Series was practically inevitable. But what no one could have expected was that during the Game 4 sweep-completing win, Ohtani delivered one of the most epic postseason games of all time. He pitched six innings to earn the victory with 10 Ks and no runs allowed. He also blasted three home runs, one of which left Dodger Stadium. —*Anthony DiComo*

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Flip through some of the best photos snapped during the 2025 season.

Starting Pictures

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7

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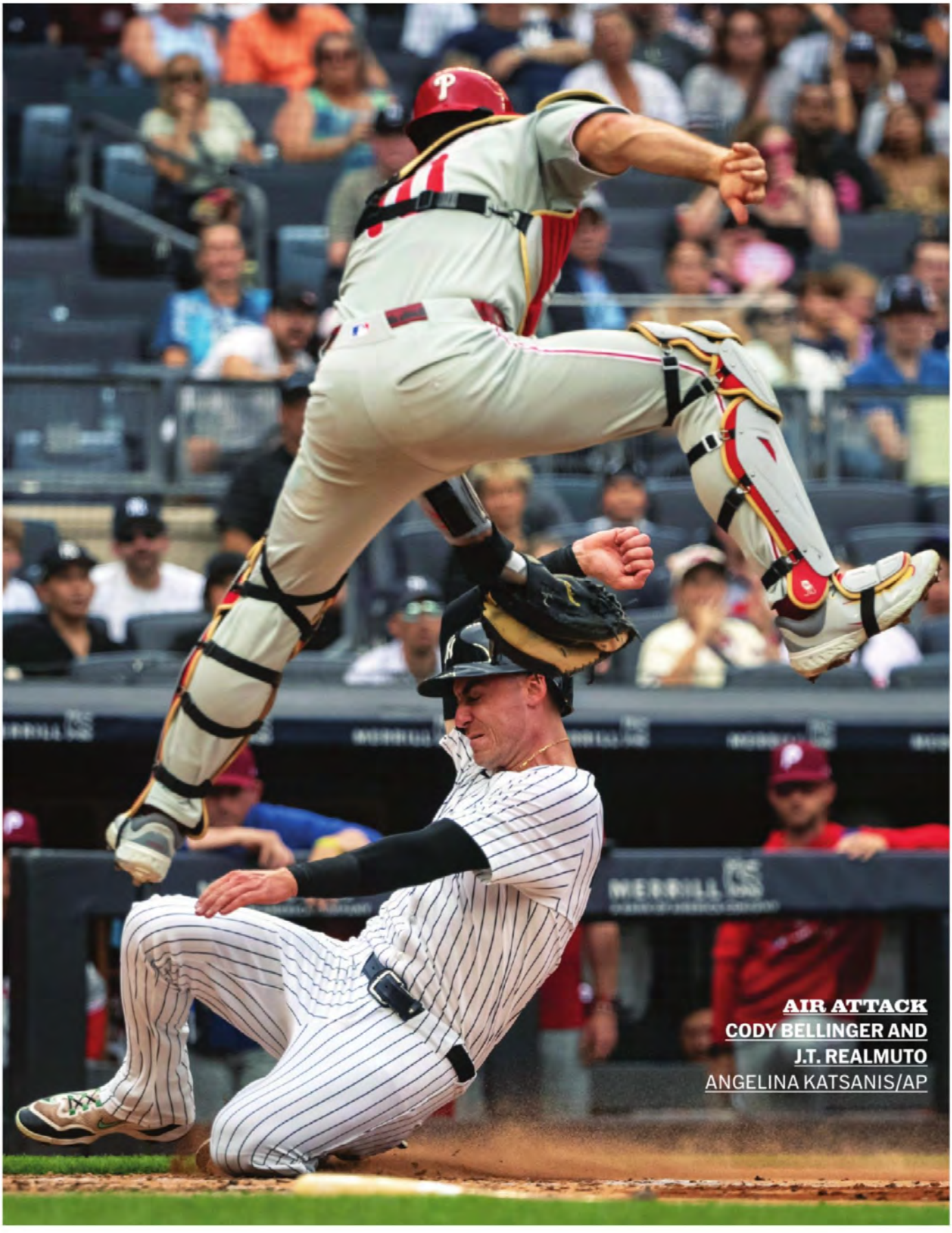

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Chronic Migraine making you feel like a spectator in your own life?

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Could it be Chronic Migraine?
Take the Quiz. Just 7 questions. Then share with your doctor.

INDICATION

BOTOX® (onabotulinumtoxinA) is a prescription medicine that is injected into muscles and used to prevent headaches in adults with chronic migraine who have 15 or more days each month with headache lasting 4 or more hours each day in people 18 years and older.

It is not known whether BOTOX is safe and effective to prevent headaches in patients with migraine who have 14 or fewer headache days each month (episodic migraine).

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

BOTOX may cause serious side effects that can be life threatening. Get medical help right away if you have any of these problems any time (hours to weeks) after injection of BOTOX:

- **Problems swallowing, speaking, or breathing,** due to weakening of associated muscles, can be severe and result in loss of life. You are at the highest risk if these problems are preexisting before injection. Swallowing problems may last for several months.
- **Spread of toxin effects.** The effect of botulinum toxin may affect areas away from the injection site and cause serious symptoms, including loss of strength and all-over muscle weakness; double vision; blurred vision; drooping eyelids; hoarseness or change or loss of voice; trouble saying words clearly; loss of bladder control; trouble breathing; and trouble swallowing.

There has not been a confirmed serious case of spread of toxin effect away from the injection site when BOTOX has been used at the recommended dose to treat chronic migraine.

BOTOX may cause loss of strength or general muscle weakness, vision problems, or dizziness within hours to weeks of receiving BOTOX. **If this happens, do not drive a car, operate machinery, or do other dangerous activities.**

Do not receive BOTOX if you are allergic to any of the ingredients in BOTOX (see Medication Guide for ingredients); had an allergic reaction to any other botulinum toxin product such as Myobloc® (rimabotulinumtoxinB), Dysport® (abobotulinumtoxinA), Xeomin® (incobotulinumtoxinA), Jeuveau® (prabotulinumtoxinA-xvfs), Daxxify® (daxibotulinumtoxinA-lanm), or Letybo® (letibotulinumtoxinA-wlbg) (this may not be a complete list of all botulinum toxin products); have a skin infection at the planned injection site.

The dose of BOTOX is not the same as, or comparable to, another botulinum toxin product.

Serious and/or immediate allergic reactions have been reported, including itching; rash; red, itchy welts; wheezing; asthma symptoms; dizziness; or feeling faint. Get medical help right away if you experience symptoms; further injection of BOTOX should be discontinued.

BOTOX®
onabotulinumtoxinA injection

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Why wait? Talk to your doctor about BOTOX® for Chronic Migraine.

BOTOX® prevents headaches in adults with Chronic Migraine, 15 or more headache days a month, each lasting 4 hours or more. BOTOX® is not approved for 14 or fewer headache days a month.

BOTOX® prevents, on average, 8 to 9 headache days and migraine/probable migraine days a month (vs 6 to 7 for placebo).

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plan to continue

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of plans cover it

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Learn more about BOTOX® or find a BOTOX® Specialist

*Since FDA approval in 2010.
†Based on IQVIA data from May 2018 to June 2023.
‡2023 BOTOX® Chronic Migraine Patient Market Research BOTOX® Current Users (n=78).
§Data on file as of December 2023. Data subject to change. Data are not a guarantee of coverage, or partial or full payment, by any payers listed. The cost of BOTOX® is different for everyone. It depends on your insurance, how much your insurance covers for BOTOX®, and what your doctor charges you for the procedure. You will want to check the specifics of your insurance plan, including your deductible and out-of-pocket costs.

Tell your doctor about all your muscle or nerve conditions, such as ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease, myasthenia gravis, or Lambert-Eaton syndrome, as you may be at increased risk of serious side effects, including difficulty swallowing and difficulty breathing from typical doses of BOTOX.

Tell your doctor about all your medical conditions, including if you have or have had bleeding problems; have plans to have surgery; had surgery on your face; have weakness of forehead muscles, trouble raising your eyebrows, drooping eyelids, and any other abnormal facial change; are pregnant or plan to become pregnant (it is not known if BOTOX can harm your unborn baby); are breastfeeding or plan to (it is not known if BOTOX passes into breast milk).

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Using BOTOX with certain other medicines may cause serious side effects. **Do not start any new medicines until you have told your doctor that you have received BOTOX in the past.**

Tell your doctor if you received any other botulinum toxin product in the last 4 months; have received injections of botulinum toxin such as Myobloc®, Dysport®, Xeomin®, Jeuveau®, Daxxify®, or Letybo® in the past (this may not be a complete list of all botulinum toxin products; tell your doctor exactly which product you received); have recently received an antibiotic by injection; take muscle relaxants; take an allergy or cold medicine; take a sleep medicine; take aspirin-like products or blood thinner.

Other side effects of BOTOX include dry mouth; discomfort or pain at the injection site; tiredness; headache; neck pain; eye problems such as double vision, blurred vision, decreased eyesight, drooping eyelids, swelling of your eyelids, and dry eyes; drooping eyebrows; and upper respiratory tract infection.

For more information, refer to the Medication Guide or talk with your doctor.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see accompanying Consumer Brief Summary, including Boxed Warning, or visit https://www.rxabbvie.com/pdf/botox_pi.pdf for full Prescribing Information.

If you are having difficulty paying for your medicine, AbbVie may be able to help. Visit AbbVie.com/PatientAccessSupport to learn more.

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US-BCM-250070 02/25

BOTOX® (onabotulinumtoxinA)
for injection, for intramuscular, intradetrusor, or intradermal use

CONSUMER BRIEF SUMMARY
Consult Package Insert for full Prescribing Information

Patient Information

This summary contains important risk information about **BOTOX**. This brief summary is not comprehensive and does not take the place of talking with your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment. To learn more, talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist. For a copy of the full Prescribing Information, visit www.BOTOX.com or call 1-800-678-1605.

What is the most important information I should know about BOTOX?

BOTOX may cause serious side effects that can be life threatening, including:
- **Problems breathing or swallowing**
- **Spread of toxin effects**

These problems can happen hours, days, to weeks after an injection of BOTOX. Call your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of these problems after treatment with BOTOX:
- **Problems swallowing, speaking, or breathing. These problems can happen hours, days, to weeks after an injection of BOTOX** usually because the muscles that you use to breathe and swallow can become weak after the injection. Death can happen as a complication if you have severe problems with swallowing or breathing after treatment with **BOTOX**.
  - People with certain breathing problems may need to use muscles in their neck to help them breathe. These people may be at greater risk for serious breathing problems with **BOTOX**.
  - Swallowing problems may last for several months. People who cannot swallow well may need a feeding tube to receive food and water. If swallowing problems are severe, food or liquids may go into your lungs. People who already have swallowing or breathing problems before receiving **BOTOX** have the highest risk of getting these problems.
- **Spread of toxin effects.** In some cases, the effect of botulinum toxin may affect areas of the body away from the injection site and cause symptoms of a serious condition called botulism. The symptoms of botulism include:
  - loss of strength and muscle weakness all over the body
  - double vision, blurred vision and drooping eyelids
  - hoarseness or change or loss of voice (dysphonia)
  - trouble saying words clearly (dysarthria)
  - loss of bladder control
  - trouble breathing
  - trouble swallowing

These symptoms can happen hours, days, to weeks after you receive an injection of **BOTOX**.

These problems could make it unsafe for you to drive a car or do other dangerous activities. See "What should I avoid while receiving **BOTOX**?"

There has not been a confirmed serious case of spread of toxin effect away from the injection site when **BOTOX** has been used at the recommended dose to treat chronic migraine, severe underarm sweating, blepharospasm, or strabismus.

What is BOTOX?

BOTOX is a prescription medicine that is injected into muscles and used:
- to treat overactive bladder symptoms such as a strong need to urinate with leaking or wetting accidents (urge urinary incontinence), a strong need to urinate right away (urgency) and urinating often (frequency) in adults when another type of medicine (anticholinergic) does not work well enough or cannot be taken.
- to treat leakage of urine (incontinence) in adults with overactive bladder due to neurologic disease when another type of medicine (anticholinergic) does not work well enough or cannot be taken.
- to treat overactive bladder due to a neurologic disease in children 5 years of age and older when another type of medicine (anticholinergic) does not work well enough or cannot be taken.
- to prevent headaches in adults with chronic migraine who have 15 or more days each month with headache lasting 4 or more hours each day.
- to treat increased muscle stiffness in people 2 years of age and older with spasticity.
- to treat the abnormal head position and neck pain that happens with cervical dystonia (CD) in adults.
- to treat certain types of eye muscle problems (strabismus) or abnormal spasm of the eyelids (blepharospasm) in people 12 years of age and older.

BOTOX is also injected into the skin to treat the symptoms of severe underarm sweating (severe primary axillary hyperhidrosis) when medicines used on the skin (topical) do not work well enough.

It is not known whether **BOTOX** is safe and effective in people younger than:
- 18 years of age for treatment of overactive bladder with urinary incontinence
- 5 years of age for the treatment of overactive bladder due to a neurologic disease
- 18 years of age for treatment of chronic migraine
- 16 years of age for treatment of cervical dystonia
- 18 years of age for treatment of hyperhidrosis
- 12 years of age for treatment of strabismus or blepharospasm
- 2 years of age for treatment of spasticity

It is not known whether **BOTOX is** safe and effective to prevent headaches in people with migraine who have 14 or fewer headache days each month (episodic migraine).

It is not known whether **BOTOX** is safe and effective for severe sweating anywhere other than your armpits.

Who should not receive BOTOX?

Do not receive **BOTOX** if you:
- are allergic to any of the ingredients in **BOTOX**. See the end of this Consumer Brief Summary for a complete list of ingredients in **BOTOX**.
- had an allergic reaction to any other botulinum toxin product such as Myobloc® (rimabotulinumtoxinB), Dysport® (abobotulinumtoxinA), Xeomin® (incobotulinumtoxinA), Jeuveau® (prabotulinumtoxinA-xvfs), Daxxify® (daxibotulinumtoxinA-lanm), or Letybo® (letibotulinumtoxinA-wlbg). This may not be a complete list of all botulinum toxin products.
- have a skin infection at the planned injection site.
- are being treated for urinary incontinence and have a urinary tract infection (UTI).
- are being treated for urinary incontinence and find that you cannot empty your bladder on your own (only applies to people who are not routinely catheterizing).

What should I tell my doctor before receiving BOTOX?

Tell your doctor about all your medical conditions, including if you:
- have a disease that affects your muscles and nerves (such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis [ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease], myasthenia gravis or Lambert-Eaton syndrome). See "What is the most important information I should know about **BOTOX**?"
- have allergies to any botulinum toxin product.
- had any side effect from any botulinum toxin product in the past.
- have or have had a breathing problem, such as asthma or emphysema.
- have or have had swallowing problems.
- have or have had bleeding problems.
- have plans to have surgery.
- had surgery on your face.
- have weakness of your forehead muscles, such as trouble raising your eyebrows.
- have drooping eyelids.
- have any other change in the way your face normally looks.
- have symptoms of a urinary tract infection (UTI) and are being treated for urinary incontinence. Symptoms of a urinary tract infection may include pain or burning with urination, frequent urination, or fever.
- have problems emptying your bladder on your own and are being treated for urinary incontinence.
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if **BOTOX** can harm your unborn baby.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if **BOTOX** passes into breast milk.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and herbal supplements. Using **BOTOX** with certain other medicines may cause serious side effects. **Do not start any new medicines until you have told your doctor that you have received BOTOX in the past.**

Especially tell your doctor if you:
- have received any other botulinum toxin product in the last four months.
- have received injections of botulinum toxin, such as Myobloc® (rimabotulinumtoxinB), Dysport® (abobotulinumtoxinA), Xeomin® (incobotulinumtoxinA), Jeuveau® (prabotulinumtoxinA-xvfs), Daxxify®

(daxibotulinumtoxinA-lanm), or Letybo® (letibotulinumtoxinA-wlbg) in the past. This may not be a complete list of all botulinum toxin products. Be sure your doctor knows exactly which product you received.
- have recently received an antibiotic by injection.
- take muscle relaxants.
- take an allergy or cold medicine.
- take a sleep medicine.
- take anti-platelets (aspirin-like products) or anti-coagulants (blood thinners).

Ask your doctor if you are not sure if your medicine is one that is listed above.

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of your medicines with you to show your doctor and pharmacist each time you get a new medicine.

How will I receive BOTOX?

- **BOTOX** is an injection that your doctor will give you.
- **BOTOX** is injected into your affected muscles, skin, or bladder.
- Your doctor may change your dose of **BOTOX**, until you and your doctor find the best dose for you.
- **Your doctor will tell you how often you will receive your dose of BOTOX injections.**

What should I avoid while receiving BOTOX?

BOTOX may cause loss of strength or general muscle weakness, vision problems, or dizziness within hours to weeks of taking **BOTOX**. **If this happens, do not drive a car, operate machinery, or do other dangerous activities.** See "What is the most important information I should know about **BOTOX**?"

What are the possible side effects of BOTOX?

BOTOX can cause serious side effects. See "What is the most important information I should know about **BOTOX**?"

Other side effects of BOTOX include:
- dry mouth.
- discomfort or pain at the injection site.
- tiredness.
- headache.
- neck pain.
- eye problems: double vision, blurred vision, decreased eyesight, drooping eyelids, swelling of your eyelids, and dry eyes.
- drooping eyebrows.
- urinary tract infection in both children and adults being treated for urinary incontinence.
- painful urination in adults being treated for urinary incontinence.
- bacteria, white blood cells, and blood in the urine of children being treated for urinary incontinence.
- inability to empty your bladder on your own and are being treated for urinary incontinence. If you have difficulty fully emptying your bladder after getting **BOTOX**, you may need to use disposable self-catheters to empty your bladder up to a few times each day until your bladder is able to start emptying again.
- allergic reactions. Symptoms of an allergic reaction to **BOTOX** may include: itching, rash, red itchy welts, wheezing, asthma symptoms, or dizziness or feeling faint. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you are wheezing or have asthma symptoms, or if you become dizzy or faint.
- upper respiratory tract infection.

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all the possible side effects of **BOTOX**. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

General information about the safe and effective use of BOTOX:

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Medication Guide. This Consumer Brief Summary summarizes the most important information about **BOTOX**. If you would like more information, talk with your doctor. You can ask your doctor or pharmacist for information about **BOTOX** that is written for health professionals.

What are the ingredients in BOTOX?

Active ingredient: onabotulinumtoxinA

Inactive ingredients: human albumin and sodium chloride

Manufactured by: AbbVie Inc.
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You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

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Ref: V8.0MG1145 Revised: October 2024

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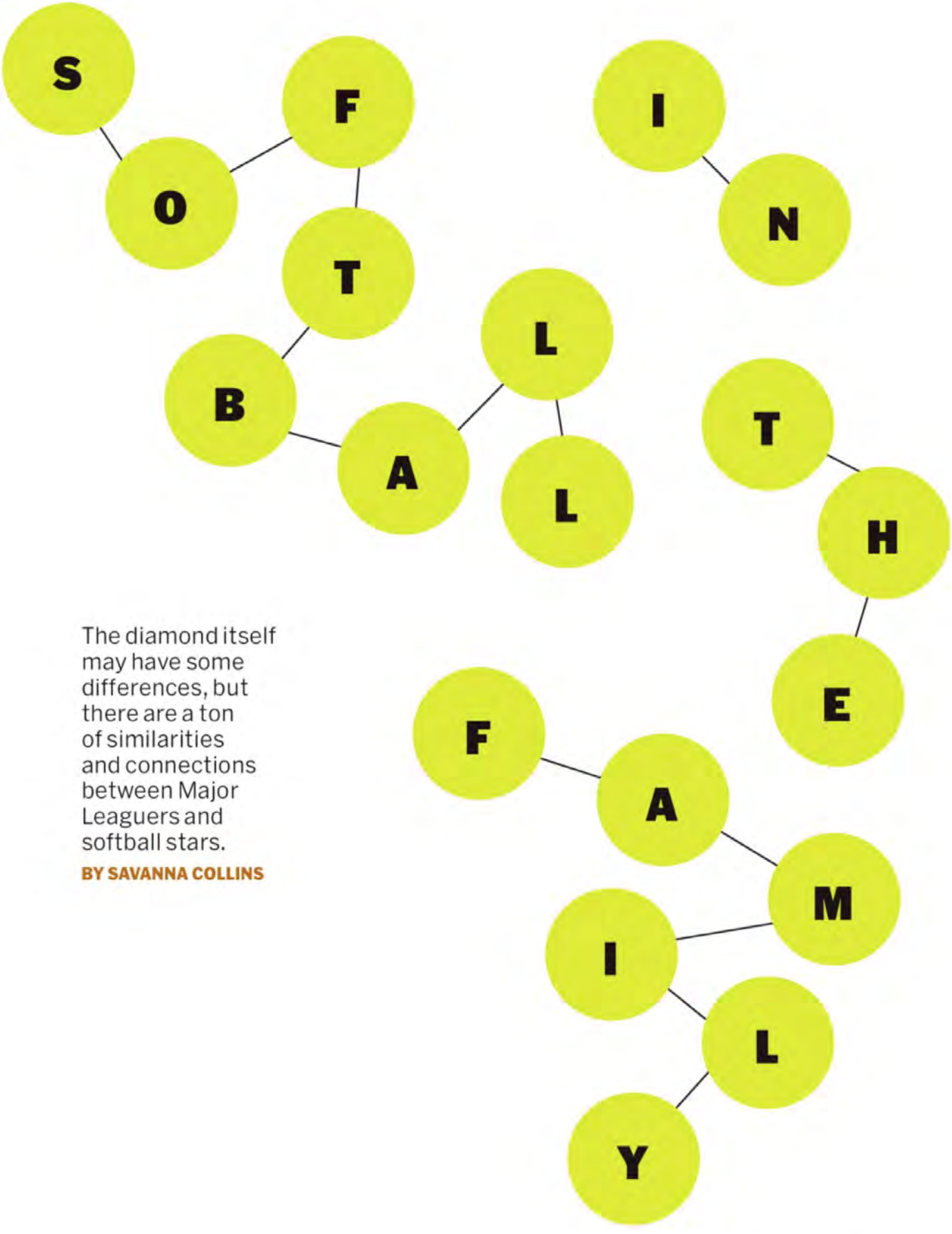

The diamond itself may have some differences, but there are a ton of similarities and connections between Major Leaguers and softball stars.

BY SAVANNA COLLINS

THE FOUR-TEAM ATHLETES UNLIMITED Softball League (AUSL) debuted this year. The Talons beat the Bandits in the best-of-three championship series to bring home the league's first title. Softball, like baseball, is everywhere. Nobody knows better than these seven Major Leaguers, who have softball players in the family, quite literally.

Dodgers manager Dave Roberts' niece is a slugger for Oklahoma

Los Angeles Dodgers manager Dave Roberts wasn't the only person in his family to win a championship last year. His niece, Ella Parker, took home the title at the Women's College World Series with Oklahoma. Although just a freshman, Parker was a fixture in the Sooners' success. Like her uncle, the lefty was at the top of the lineup and was named a top-three finalist for Freshman of the Year because of her stunning .415/.516/.722 slash line for a 1.238 OPS.

Roberts may manage one of the most explosive offenses in baseball right now, but his niece also packs the power in the family.

Jazz Chisholm Jr.'s grandmother played for the Bahamian National Softball Team

As soon as Yankees infielder Jazz Chisholm Jr. could stand, his grandmother Pat Coakley took him to the ballpark. Affectionately known by her grandson as "Grammy Pat," she played shortstop for the Bahamian national softball team in 1986. She was in her 40s when she began playing for the team, and didn't retire until after her 60th birthday. She was Chisholm's first coach and still gives him tips now and then.

Bobby Witt Jr. was surrounded by 3 softball sisters growing up

Almost all Witt family relationships begin with or come back to baseball and softball. Bobby Witt Jr.'s three older sisters make up the "four moms" in his life: Nikki, Kianna (whom he calls "Kiki"), and Shaley.

The three Witt sisters each played softball growing up. Nikki, the oldest, is married to James Russell, who pitched in seven MLB seasons, primarily with the Chicago Cubs.

It doesn't end there. Bobby's wife, Maggie Black, was also a college softball player. Black played shortstop and third base (Bobby's two positions with the Royals) for Northwestern State University in Louisiana.

Gerrit Cole's wife was a national champion with the Bruins

Gerrit and Amy Cole, née Crawford, crossed paths in the UCLA athletics weight room. Gerrit was on the baseball team, and Amy played for the Bruins softball team – both of which had the early-morning workout slot. (Amy's brother, Brandon, also played for UCLA and for many years with the Giants.) In 2010, Gerrit helped the Bruins to the NCAA Men's College World Series, while Amy won the NCAA Women's College World Series.

One of Amy's coaches was AUSL Talons general manager Lisa Fernandez; she was an assistant coach for UCLA at the time.

Brandon and Madison Lowe went from Terps to true love

Brandon Lowe and Madison (Martin) Lowe met while pursuing their collegiate careers at the University of Maryland. They both arrived on campus in 2012 and met in study hall.

Madison was a starter in the circle for the Terps since her freshman year and by her senior season, led the team with a 3.57 ERA. That year, she was voted the team's Most Valuable Player. Brandon was on the squad at Maryland until 2015, when he was named a Second Team All-

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American by D1 Baseball. He was then drafted in the third round of the MLB Draft by the Tampa Bay Rays.

Now, Brandon is in his eighth MLB season with the Rays, while Madison is the owner of her bakery, Sweet and Lowe.

George Springer's sisters played and coached collegiate softball (and his wife was a player, too)

The Springer name is cemented in baseball and softball circles in Connecticut. Not only was George Springer the 2011 Big East Player of the Year and All-American at the University of Connecticut before being drafted by the Houston Astros, but his sisters were tearing it up on diamonds across the state, too.

Nicole Springer was a four-year All-Conference performer at Central Connecticut State and became a pitching coach for Southern Connecticut State University. Lena Springer played at Ohio State and she returned home to take over as the head coach at Trinity College in Hartford.

Both sisters were members of the Puerto Rican national team, as was Springer's wife, Charlise, who also starred at the University of Albany.

Garrett Mitchell and Haley Cruse Mitchell both achieved big league dreams

It only took two years after the Milwaukee Brewers drafted Garrett Mitchell for him to make "The Show," but his wife, Haley Cruse, had her pro moment before he did.

Haley was a distinguished outfielder for the Oregon Ducks for four seasons and is the only player in program history to lead the team in hitting for four straight seasons. Her numbers in the box weren't the only thing on the rise; Haley earned fame for her dancing videos on TikTok while at Oregon and has nearly 800,000 followers on the app.

After her collegiate career, Haley signed with the USSSA Pride, a former pro softball team, in 2021. She played two seasons with the team before retiring. ◆

Savanna Collins is the Senior Reporter for the AUSL. You can follow her on X @savannaecollins.

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Father time is undefeated, but a couple of MLB's quickest players have said 'not so fast' to slowing down.

BY MIKE PETRIELLO

DON'T STOP NOW

IN BASEBALL, AS IN LIFE, THERE'S REALLY ONLY ONE CERTAINTY: You're going to slow down, and eventually stop. Time remains undefeated.

If you've heard the phrase "aging curve," then you already know where we're going here. Fastballs get slower, as do bats, as do feet. Aging defenders move to easier positions, and when fielders get younger and faster, defense gets better.

It's the one fact of baseball that applies to everyone. Well, that is, everyone except Twins outfielder Byron Buxton and Phillies shortstop Trea Turner.

A decade ago, when Statcast arrived in 2015, Buxton (then in his age-21 season) and Turner (22) were the fastest men in baseball. Here in 2025, Buxton (now 31) and Turner (32) are essentially tied with Bobby Witt Jr. for … being the fastest men in baseball. Take the entire Statcast Era together cumulatively, and Buxton and Turner are similarly tied with Witt for … the fastest men in baseball.

As the rest of the sport is slowing down with age, Buxton and Turner, born six months apart in 1993, are as fast as ever.

This, while most of their peers have slowed down. Francisco Lindor, another 1993 baby, debuted in 2015 with 87th percentile speed. In July, he celebrated his 200th stolen base on his way to Cooperstown, but he's now got slightly below-average speed (47th percentile). Mookie Betts, eight months senior to Turner, who also peaked with 90th percentile speed in 2015 and kept it for a number of years — before a long-running slide has him as a slower-than-average 37th percentile this year.

Sometimes it's because of injuries; like Ronald Acuña Jr., a comparatively youthful 27 years old, who once had elite 97th-percentile speed but now lives in the 68th percentile, thanks in part to a pair of major knee surgeries. The way these things work, it's not that surprising when a Gold Glove-winning center fielder in Marcell Ozuna (peak speed of 82nd percentile in 2015, at 24 years old) becomes one of the slowest players in the game (7th percentile, in 2025), and a full-time designated hitter who now no longer touches a glove.

It's the way it's supposed to work. But for Turner, who turned 32 in June, and Buxton, who follows in December, it hasn't happened that way.

What's different about these two? The genetic lottery, or specific training methods, or all of it?

TREA TURNER

Turner is the most valuable baserunner in Statcast history, piling up the most value both in taking bases and stealing them. The only time in his career he didn't rank in the 99th percentile or better in speed was last season, when he missed several weeks recovering from a hamstring injury – which sunk him only to the 96th percentile. This year, he's back atop the leaderboard with Witt Jr. and Buxton.

"Obviously, he works his butt off offseason-wise and things like that," Phillies slugger Bryce Harper said, "but I think genetically, he's just a freak, you know? He's shredded to the bone, too, so that helps."

Harper was Turner's teammate for parts of four seasons in Washington as well as the last three in Philadelphia. He may very well have seen more of Turner than anybody.

"Just the way he works and maintains is huge for him," Harper said. "He's always trying to progress, too. Whether it's doing stuff in the weight room or on the field or in the offseason, he never wants to slow down — and, obviously, he hasn't."

Phillies manager Rob Thomson sees Turner the same way.

"Some guys are just freaks, and he's one of them — and I mean that in a good way, obviously," he said.

Freak. There's that word again.

"It's a little bit of everything, for sure, but definitely some genetics, obviously," said Turner, who credited his mother's side of the family for his speed.

So, was he just born fast?

"I had to work on it. … Even when I was in high school, I wasn't that fast," Turner said. "I got a little faster my senior year and into college.

"I just pay attention to my body a lot. I pay attention to the way I walk, I pay attention to how I'm running. It's one thing to run fast, but it's another to run fast and stay healthy and be in a good spot."

BYRON BUXTON

While Turner's lower body has stayed relatively healthy, Buxton's litany of injuries sometimes feels endless. In his 11th season in the Majors, he's taken 400 plate appearances in a season only twice — 2017 and 2025.

But Buxton worked his way back this season to not only peak speed, but one of the best years of his career.

"Buck has been blessed in many ways with great ability," Twins manager Rocco Baldelli said, "but you don't get blessed with great work ethic and determination. That's

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different. There's physical gifts that God gave you that you can thank your parents for. He has an entire other set of strengths that really speaks to all that he's accomplished, which is the fact that he shows up and the work ethic is incredible, and he has this desire to be great, and he doesn't let challenges get in his way; he kind of uses them to propel himself off of them and constantly improve.

"You have to be a through-the-roof kind of guy, determination-wise, to want this. You have to almost be obsessed in a lot of ways with that level of work. It's hard to take care of your body to that extent, and he does it. He continues to do it. It's not a 'sometimes' thing or a 'most of the time' thing. It's his life."

It's not just pure running speed, either. It's what it becomes. While Turner has been the most valuable baserunner in Statcast tracking history, it's actually Buxton who ranks with Corbin Carroll and Elly De La Cruz as the best baserunners of 2025. It's Buxton who has been one of the truly elite defensive outfielders in the sport.

After all the injuries, he's back to the same elite speed he somehow never really seemed to lose, never sinking below the 93rd percentile, which happened during a 2022 campaign when he dealt with knee pain all year long.

"Byron likes running," Twins head trainer Nick Paparesta said. "He loves running. He likes playing defense. Not that he doesn't like to hit, but he likes all those other things more than he likes hitting."

Who stays this fast, this far into their careers?

In 11 years of tracking, we've seen a 30-or-older player hit the elite level of 30 ft/sec in a full season just three times. Two of them are by Turner. The other is Buxton.

Setting aside age for a moment, only 40 players since 2015 have hit the elite level of 30 ft/sec at all, and Turner and Buxton themselves are responsible for about 20 percent of those seasons.

We identified only 10 other players since 2015 who had at least five qualified seasons of running, with at least one being 30 ft/sec or better, and played (or are playing) at least through their age-30 season. Four of them — Harrison Bader, Garrett Hampson, Tyler O'Neill and Billy Hamilton — lost that elite speed by 31, but still at least maintained above-average fleetness. One, Buxton's former teammate Manuel Margot, followed a more Ozuna-like path to lead-footedness.

A handful of others — Tim Locastro, Jorge Mateo, Adam Engel, Eli White and Myles Straw — have flashed top-end speed into their early 30s, though of course with a small fraction of the playing time. It's possible that other, non-qualified players — think Terrence Gore or Dairon Blanco — may have been able to maintain that speed had they possessed other skills to warrant such playing time. But they don't, and that's the point. It's one thing to keep the speed as Turner and Buxton have; it's another altogether to do it over such a long period of time, playing at such a high all-around level. (Turner is 10th in WAR since 2015; Buxton, limited by injuries, still manages to be 42nd.)

In both cases, it's not just about having the elite speed, or working to maintain it. It's understanding at 31 what you may not have at 21.

"I say a lot that I've got to keep up with the 20-year-olds, because on that list, there are very few guys over 30 in the top 10," said Turner. "But I kind of have the right body for it, I don't have a lot of weight on me. So I try to stay in the same weight category: I don't want to gain a bunch of weight and have that change my game, or vice versa, lose a bunch of weight. So I feel like I've got a good balance."

"No 20- or 21-year-old guy knows that they have to do these things," echoed Baldelli. "Once [Buxton] realized what he needed to do to stay in this game and play it at a high level, he just put himself to it and did it, and he brings it every day. It's hard to look like him, play like him, and honestly, get back from what he's gotten back from at 30-something years old. It's a very difficult thing to do. Most people can't do that."

It's work. It's genetics. It's all of it. What it is is unusual. It's elite speed, despite age and injury. It's bucking the trend to which every other player inevitably succumbs. Everyone, that is, except them — so far. ◆

MLB.com's Paul Casella and Matthew Leach contributed to the reporting of this article. Mike Petriello is a stats analyst for MLB.com, focusing on Statcast and Baseball Savant.

KELLY GAVIN/MLB PHOTOS (2025); NICK WASS/AP

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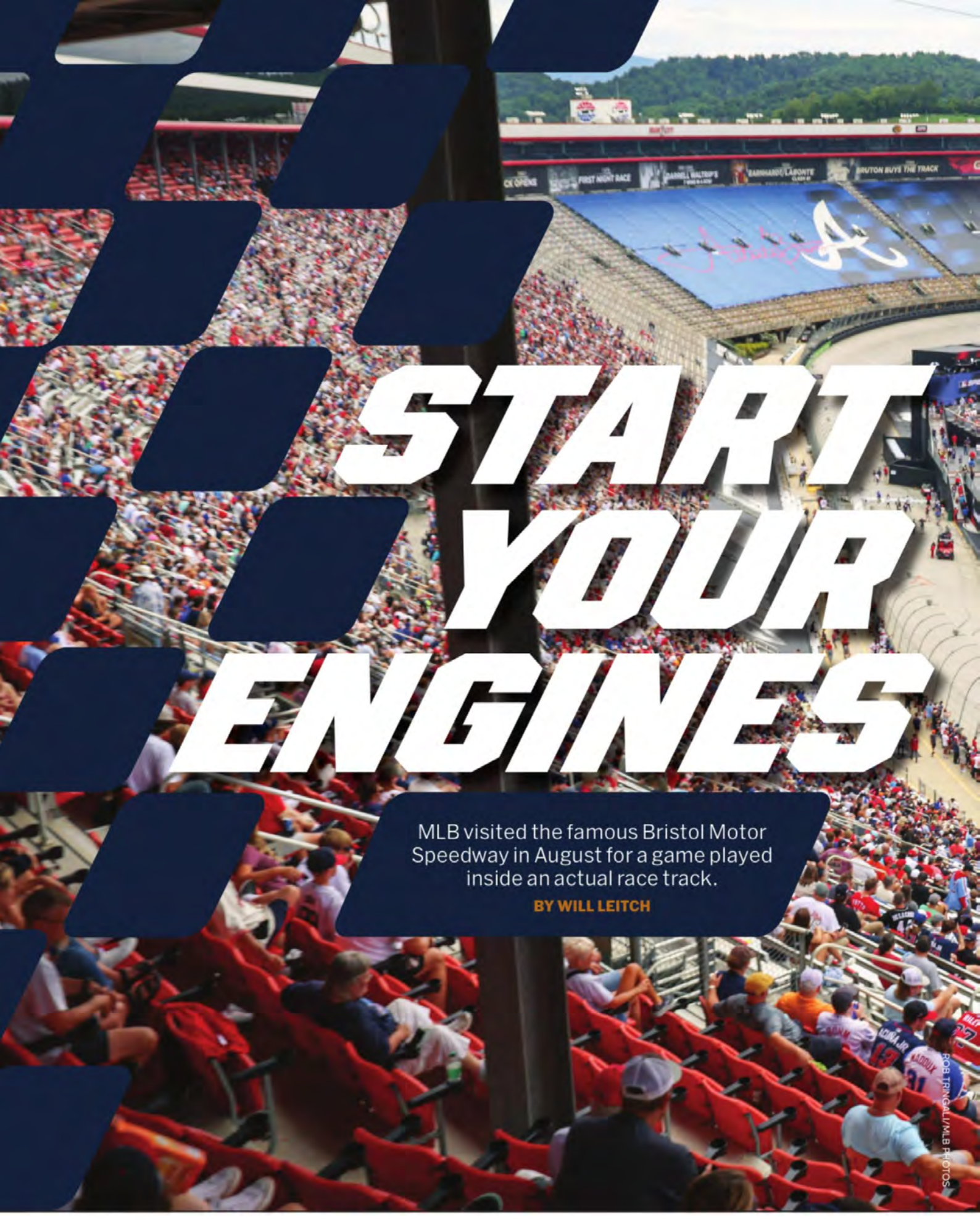
START YOUR ENGINES

MLB visited the famous Bristol Motor Speedway in August for a game played inside an actual race track.

BY WILL LEITCH



ROB TRINGALI/MLB PHOTOS

GREAT MOMENTS in Bristol HISTORY
SPEEDWAY
CLASSIC '25
PARKWAY PITSTOP
PARKWAY PITSTOP
BRISTOL
IT'S BRISTOL
Atlanta Braves

NOBODY DISLIKED A RAIN delay — and yet handled it in a way we can all appreciate — more than Charlie Brown. No matter how hard the rain was coming down, and rain always seemed to be coming down in Peanuts strips, Charlie forever believed it was going to stop any minute now, and they would soon get back to the game. "This is just a drizzle," he would say, as the water line began to rise to his knees, still standing on the mound, ready to pitch. That's baseball, right there.

The rain delays that plagued the MLB Speedway Classic in Bristol, Tenn., on August 2 were discouraging to anyone who was there for the spectacle. That's particularly true considering just how close the game came to starting on time. It's accurate to say the game featured a two-hour-and-17-minute delay, but that doesn't really capture it. I mean, we were all set. Tim McGraw had finished his pregame concert. The F/A-18 Super Hornets had flown over during the national anthem. Players from both teams had been driven around the track, and the starting lineups had been introduced, with each player running onto the field to fireworks. Chipper Jones and Johnny Bench, along with NASCAR drivers Kyle Busch and Chase Elliott, had even thrown out the ceremonial first pitch. The adopted home team Reds were ready to jog onto the field. It was all happening.

Then the rains came. An estimated 91,000-plus tickets were sold for the game, and almost all of those people stayed for the entire delay. And when the game returned, they made themselves heard. When the grounds crew came on to roll off the tarp, there was an instant deafening roar from the crowd in appreciation. When Chase Burns threw the first pitch to Jurickson Profar, the grateful fans let loose a burst of applause that boomed and rattled around the stadium. A mass of 91,000 or so fans screaming at once creates quite the racket. They had the Charlie Brown mentality. This is just a drizzle.

As you saw, the game that night was not long for this world. But that's baseball, too: Rain, disappointment, nothing quite going to plan … and yet still the hope that the next day gives, that you can go out there again and this time it will be better.

The next day, it was. In front of a still enormous crowd, the Reds and Braves restarted their game beneath skies that, while not exactly sunny, were no longer dumping buckets of water on everyone. And those fans were treated to what they showed up for in the first place: An entertaining baseball game played in a place where a baseball game had never been played before.

It was definitely fun, and unique to the environ. Eli White's three-run homer in the top of the second introduced the home run pace car, as well as Braves mascot Blooper rolling himself down the sloped track in celebration. It has always been fun to watch kids scramble for home run balls; to see them do it after the ball has hit a NASCAR track, bounced up and over the protective catch fence and landed among a gaggle of kids who just happened to be walking by that spot at that particular moment is a spectacle I won't soon forget.

Nor will I forget the loudest sound of the day, when Profar hit a triple into the right-field gap in the seventh inning, reminding everyone that there's nothing more exciting in baseball than a triple.

The fan stuff was a blast, too. The kinetic energy required for a T-shirt cannon to launch into the upper regions of Bristol

MARY DECICCO/MLB PHOTOS (EXTERIOR, CONCERT); ANDREW FERGUSON/MLB PHOTOS

MARY DECICCO/MLB PHOTOS (EXTERIOR, CONCERT); ANDREW FERGUSON/MLB PHOTOS

ROB TRINGALI/MLB PHOTOS

Motor Speedway could probably power a small country for months. You got a great view of that on the massive scoreboard/jumbotron hanging over the stadium, called "Colossus," in which every highlight featured a player looming taller than Wrigley Field. I was also happy that someone, Braves designated hitter Drake Baldwin, finally hit it with a fly ball; I'd been waiting the whole game for that to happen.

In the end, we got a tight, close ballgame, with some real drama in the bottom of the ninth, with the Reds getting two runners on and bringing up De La Cruz as the potential winning run. As it turned out, Raisel Iglesias settled down and got the final three batters to secure a 4-2 Braves win, a highlight of a disappointing season for the franchise but one their fans, and Reds fans, will remember forever regardless.

After waiting that long, to come so close to first pitch and have it thwarted, it was honestly just a relief to get to watch some actual baseball. Even in such a special place, in the end, it was just a crisp, taut contest between two teams who, while soaking up the atmosphere as much as the fans were, were there to play a baseball game. The atmosphere at times felt surreal. But the game itself was enough. It always is.

Here's a look at the best moments from the first Major League game of its kind.

WHITE MAKES DINGER HISTORY — TWICE!

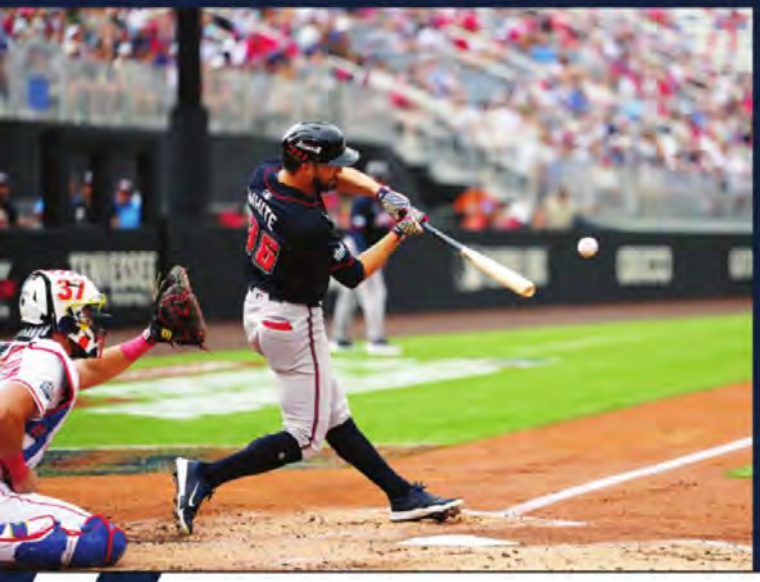
White experienced the thrill of becoming the first player to homer at a NASCAR track. Five innings later, he became the first to have a two-homer game.

White completed his second career two-homer game with a seventh-inning leadoff homer against Reds reliever Scott Barlow. The Braves right fielder also hit a no-doubt three-run shot off Reds reliever Brent Suter in the second.

"I kind of blacked out running around the bases," White said. "The bullpen was getting on me when I went out there to right [field] because I didn't acknowledge them. But that was a super cool experience."

DEFENSIVE PLAY OF THE GAME

Austin Riley's exit from the game with lower abdominal pain led Luke Williams to enter as the Braves' third baseman in the third. In the eighth, the backup infielder made what might have been a game-saving play.



With the bases loaded and two outs, Williams dove to his left, grabbed Ke'Bryan Hayes' hot shot and rose to his knees to make a throw that just beat Tyler Stephenson to the second base bag.

DE LA CRUZ TURNS TWO

In the top of the eighth, All-Star shortstop Elly De La Cruz made a slick play to get the Reds out of the inning. With Drake Baldwin on first base, Michael Harris II hit a one-out liner to the middle of the infield. De La Cruz stopped the ball from his knees on a short hop into the dirt and touched second base for the force play on Baldwin, and threw to first base for the inning-ending double play.

REDZILLA TAKES ITS LAPS

A popular in-game entertainment from Cincinnati's Great American Ball Park was brought to the Speedway. In the middle of the third inning, Redzilla took to the track and sped around for a lap doing its normal task of shooting toy balls out into the seats.

Fans who didn't score a ball in the third got another crack after the seventh inning, when Redzilla took a special bonus lap. ◆

Will Leitch is an author and contributor for MLB.com. Mark Bowman and Mark Sheldon contributed to this story.

MARY DECICCO/MLB PHOTOS (DE LA CRUZ); DANIEL SHIREY/MLB PHOTOS

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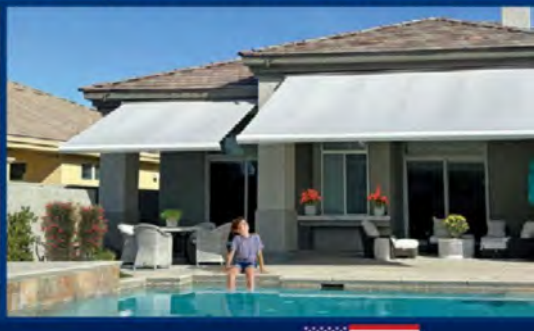

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BY ANDREW SIMON

WINNING WAYS

DUSTIN SATLOFF/MLB PHOTOS

Ever wonder how the World Series is likely to end? Here's a full breakdown of the who, what and how of past Fall Classic-clinching plays.

W

WALKER BUEHLER DELIVERED.

The curveball dropped. Alex Verdugo swung over it. Will Smith smothered the ball in the dirt and applied the tag to make it official. Then, the celebration was on in the Bronx.

This moment, when the Dodgers sealed the eighth World Series title in franchise history, will be remembered forever by the team and its fanbase. An entire year of hard work — a lifetime, really — funneled into a single moment of unrestrained joy.

There is nothing like it, and now it's a treasured memory that joins a select group in baseball history. Here is a breakdown of everything you need to know about World Series final plays.

WHICH TEAM WINS?

A World Series championship celebration is epic no matter where it is, but it has to be extra-special in front of your home fans. With that being said, there is no historical trend toward clinching a title at home, as the Dodgers showed by hoisting the trophy at Yankee Stadium.

Including 2024, the team that locked up a win on the final play has done so in its home ballpark just 54 times, compared with 65 times on the road. Those numbers don't include the Dodgers clinching the 2020 Fall Classic at a neutral site (Globe Life Field in Texas) due to COVID-related restrictions.

Naturally, the team on defense is the one celebrating after the final play in the overwhelming majority of cases — 109 of them to be exact. Meanwhile, the offensive team has notched a walk-off, clinching victory 11 times, including nine times via a base hit. That has not occurred for quite some time, however. After we saw four final-game walk-offs between 1991-2001, there is now a 23-World Series drought.

WHEN DOES IT END?

A World Series Game 7 is the height of postseason drama, and baseball fans have been fortunate enough to see plenty over the years. In fact, a plurality of Fall Classics have ended in

BRAD MANGIN/MLB PHOTOS

MIKE LAWRENCE/MLB PHOTOS

FINAL GAME OF THE WORLD SERIES

Game 7
40 times

Game 5
30 times

Game 6
27 times

Game 4
19 times

Game 8
4 times

Game 7, and it's gone the distance more than twice as often as it has ended in a sweep.

Game 8? No, that is not a mistake. There really were four such games between 1903 (the first World Series) and 1921, due to either a best-of-nine format or an earlier game ending in a tie due to darkness.

In terms of the inning, it's not surprising that most World Series have been wrapped up in the ninth. However, that final game has gone to extra frames 10 times, including three in recent years: 2012 (Giants over Tigers), '15 (Royals over Mets — which tied a record, at 12 innings) and '16 (Cubs over Cleveland).

WHAT IS THE FINAL MATCHUP?

Being part of the final plate appearance of the World Series puts a lot on a player's shoulders. That's especially true when the outcome of the game and series hangs in the balance with the score close.

But even if that's not the case, you know that final play will have a prominent place on highlight reels forever. That's an honor and privilege for the triumphant pitcher or batter — and a scary prospect for the one on the short end of the play.

In 2024, Buehler became the 110th different pitcher to be on the mound for the final play of a World Series, and Verdugo became the 114th different batter to be at the plate. That leaves a select group to do either of those things more than once.

Nobody who followed baseball in the 1990s and 2000s will be surprised to see that Rivera is in a class by himself when it comes to being on the mound for the end of the World Series. Even setting aside getting walked off by Arizona's Luis Gonzalez in 2001, Rivera picked up the final Fall Classic out twice as many times as anyone else in baseball history.

ED REINKE/AP

PITCHERS ON THE MOUND FOR THE MOST FINAL PLAYS

Mariano Rivera
5^ (1998-2001, '09)

Will McEnaney
2 (1975-76)

Rollie Fingers
2 (1972, '74)

Bob Gibson
2 (1964, '67)

Sandy Koufax
2 (1963, '65)

Ralph Terry
2^ (1960, '62)

Bob Kuzava
2 (1951-52)

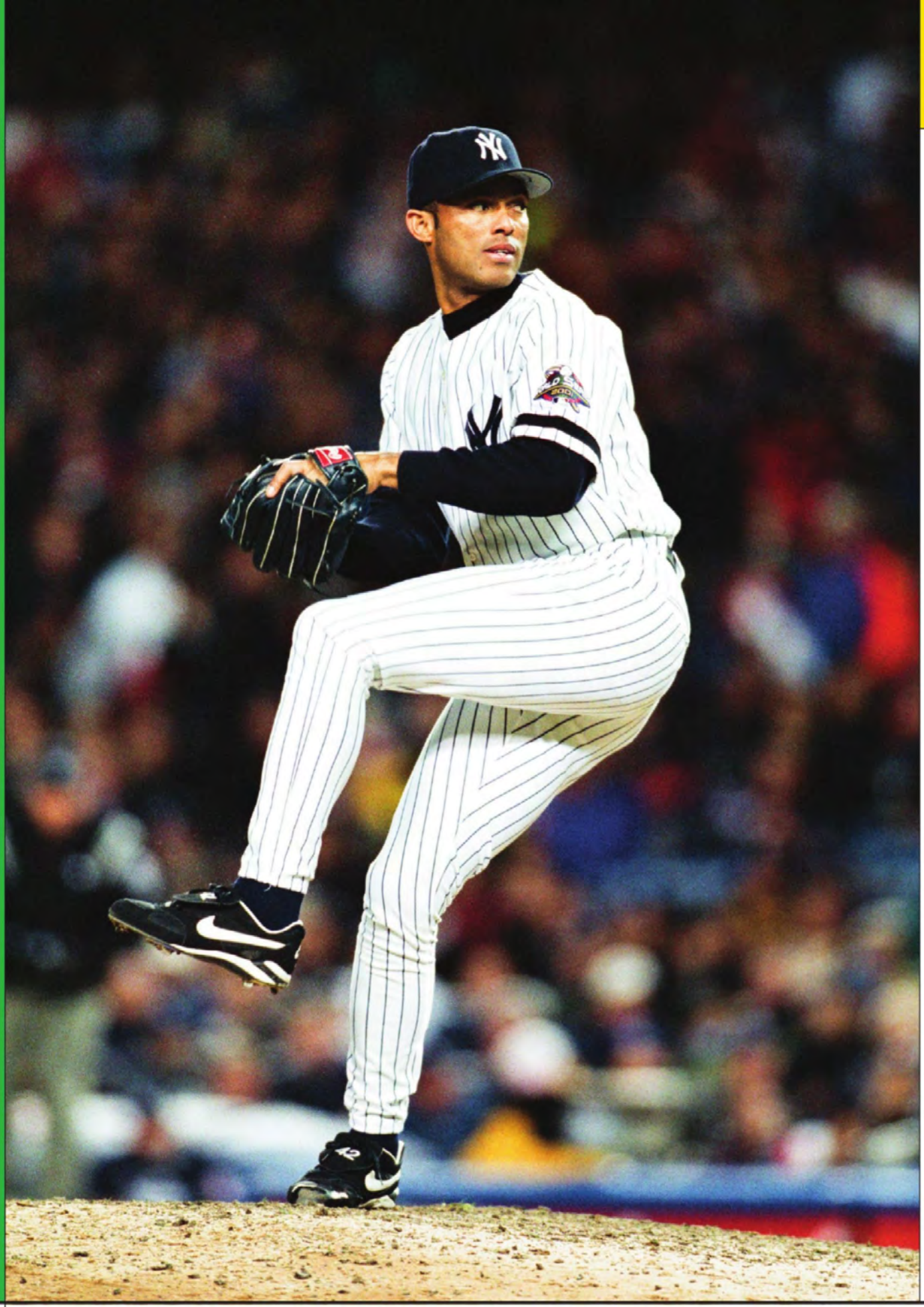
Joe Page
2 (1947, '49)

Johnny Murphy
2 (1936, '39)

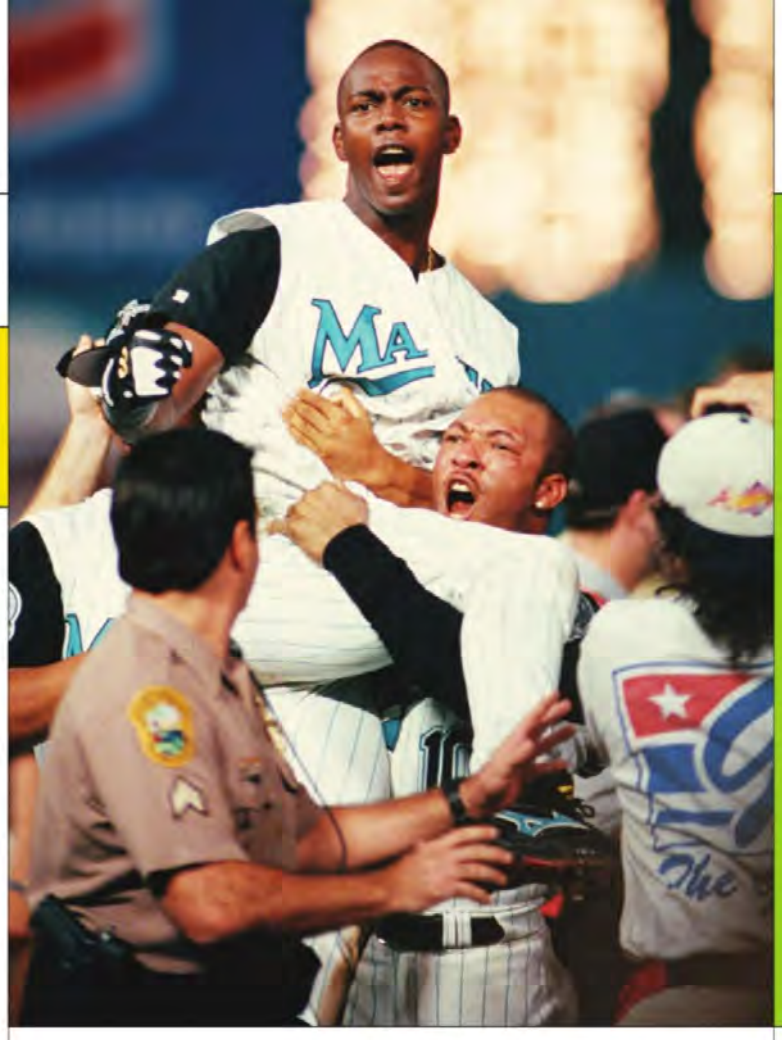
Art Nehf
2 (1921-22)

Christy Mathewson
2^ (1905, '12)

^Includes one walk-off loss



RON VESELY/MLB PHOTOS



BATTERS AT THE PLATE FOR THE MOST FINAL PLAYS

Edgar Renteria	Goose Goslin	Boss Schmidt
1-for-2	1-for-2	0-for-2
(1997, 2004)	(1925, '35)	(1907, '08)

Daniel Hudson actually had a chance to make history of his own in 2024. Hudson, a member of the Dodgers' World Series bullpen, already had recorded the final out of the 2019 World Series for the Nationals. Had Hudson closed out the '24 Fall Classic — he ultimately did not pitch in the clincher — he would have been the first pitcher to throw the final pitch of the Series for multiple teams.

While nobody alive today watched Schmidt play, he had a role in a quirky piece of World Series history. In both 1907 and '08, the Cubs sealed a championship over the Tigers by winning Game 5 in Detroit by a score of 2-0. And in both cases, Schmidt made the final out by hitting a pop-up to end the bottom of the ninth inning. (Amazingly, he was also due up next when teammate Tom Jones made the final out of the 1909 World Series against the Pirates.)

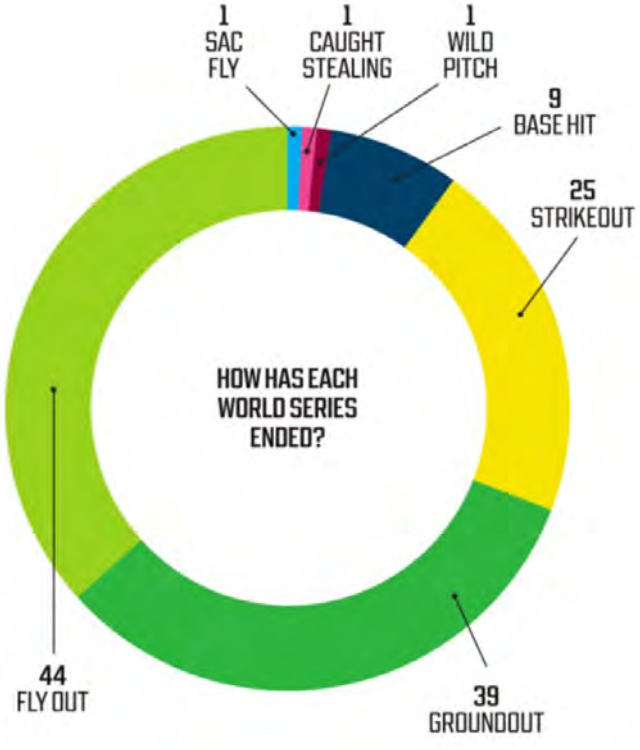
WHAT HAPPENS ON THE LAST PLAY?

As previously noted, 11 World Series final plays have been of the walk-off variety, and those instances are shown in the pink chart.

The Blue Jays' Joe Carter (1993) and the Pirates' Bill Mazeroski (1960) lay claim to the only World Series-clinching walk-off homers in baseball history. Meanwhile, the World Series has not concluded with a walk-off that came on a play other than a hit since the Yankees' Earle Combs scampered home on a wild pitch to beat the Pirates in 1927.

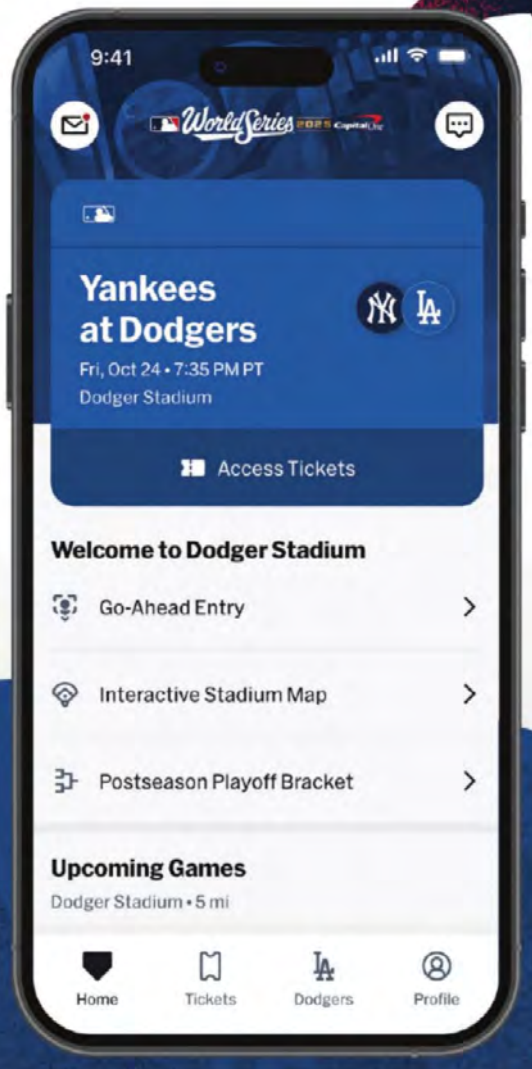
WORLD SERIES-CLINCHING WALK-OFFS

Singles	5
Home Runs	2
Doubles	2
Sac Flies	1
Wild Pitches	1



MICHAEL ZAGARIS/MLB PHOTOS

World Series 2025 Capital One



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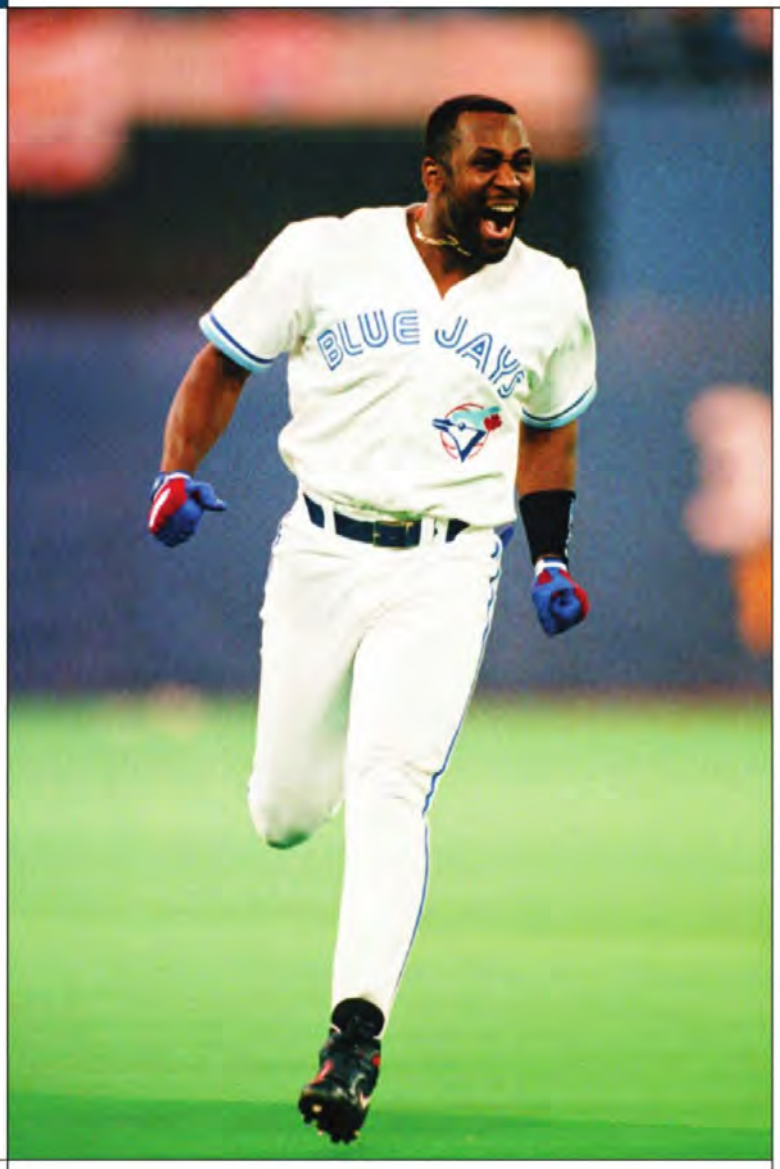


RON VESELY/MLB PHOTOS

The Fall Classic has never ended on a triple, a walk, a hit batter or (thankfully) an error.

And what about final outs?

To further break down the numbers on Page 124, two of the groundouts have been double plays, but nobody has closed out the World Series by turning two since the Yankees did it to the Dodgers in 1947. The outs in the air include five line drives and 13 pop flies. Twice the World Series has ended on a bunt attempt: The Dodgers' Lee Lacy popped one up against the Yankees in 1977, while the Braves' Otis Nixon unsuccessfully tried to drag one for a hit against the Blue Jays in 1992.

Only one player has ever been caught stealing to end the Fall Classic. That was none other than the Sultan of Swat, Babe Ruth, who was thrown out trying to swipe second base with the Yankees trailing the Cardinals by one run in the bottom of the ninth inning of Game 7 in 1926.

In recent years, World Series final outs have followed the overall trend of a rising strikeout rate across MLB. From 2006-24, it ended on a K in 12 of 19 instances. Eight of those 12 were on swings, while four have been looking.

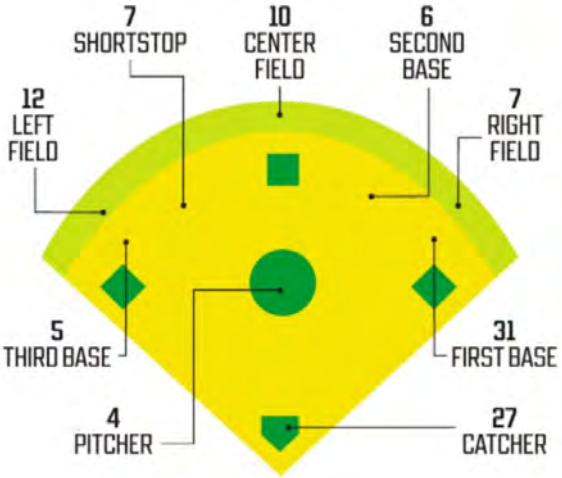
WHO CATCHES THE FINAL OUT?

Imagine the feeling of having the ball settling into your glove for the final out of a World Series-clinching victory. There aren't many players in Major League history who can say they have experienced that.

If we remove the 11 World Series to end in a walk-off, there are 109 final outs. Below is how they break down, not in terms of who the ball was hit to, but rather which player wound up with the ball at the end of the play.

Note: The total for catchers includes strikeouts and the total for first basemen includes throws to first.

While recent final outs have included assists by second basemen or shortstops, it's been quite some time since a middle infielder had the ball in his glove at the conclusion of the Fall Classic. The last shortstop to pull off that feat was the Orioles' Cal Ripken Jr., who caught a jam-shot liner from the Phillies' Garry Maddox in 1983. And the last second baseman was the Cardinals' Dal Maxvill, who snagged a pop fly off the bat of the Yankees' Bobby Richardson in 1964. ◆



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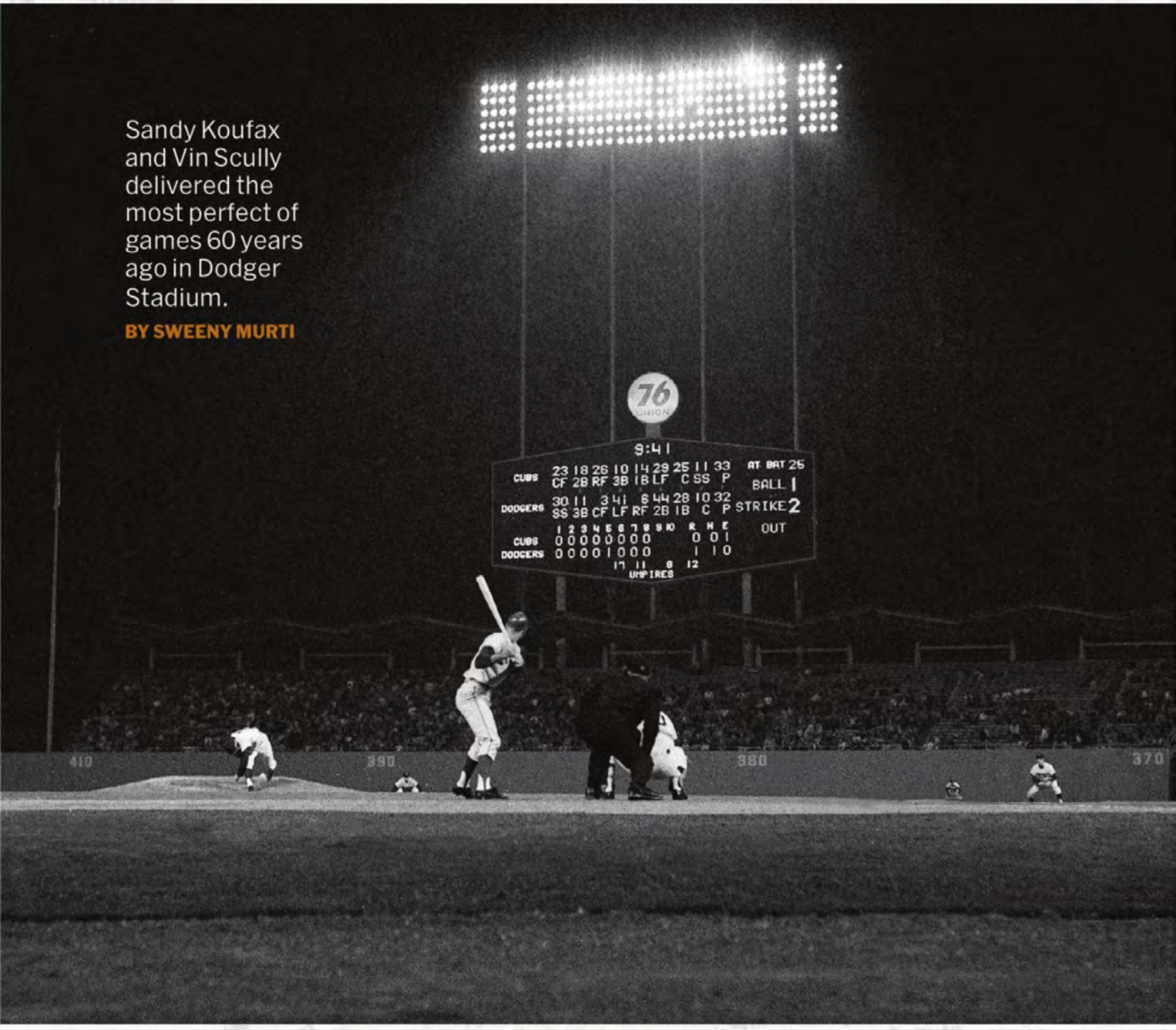
Sandy Koufax and Vin Scully delivered the most perfect of games 60 years ago in Dodger Stadium.

BY SWEENY MURTI



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YELLOWSTONE TO YOSEMITE

SIXTY YEARS AGO IN SEPTEMBER, FANS witnessed the most perfect game of all time. Perfect on the mound because of Sandy Koufax, and perfect in the booth because of Vin Scully.

It's that second part that people remember just as much as the game itself.

"Whatever Vinnie did, every night it was just something special," Koufax said. "He was so good, it was almost better listening to it than doing it."

Koufax beat the Cubs 1-0 and struck out 14 as he hurled just the sixth perfect game since 1900 on Sept. 9, 1965, at Dodger Stadium.

The recording of Scully calling the ninth inning, in which Koufax strikes out the side, is widely considered the best piece of baseball broadcasting ever.

"There are so many memorable and pitch-perfect Vin Scully calls," Hall of Fame broadcaster Bob Costas said. "But if you had to pick just one to impress upon somebody his unique and surpassing talent, you would choose that half-inning."

Koufax and others spoke to MLB.com earlier this summer to reflect on the 60th anniversary of his historic night, and Scully's accompanying narration.

"YOU START OUT EVERY GAME TO PITCH A PERFECT GAME," KOUFAX said, reflecting on the moment. "You're not going to, and you know it. You just give up your goals grudgingly as you go. This one, I didn't have to give it up."

Like Koufax, Scully had been here before, too. Eight perfect innings were in the books, and now it was time to pursue the final three outs. Here is how the Hall of Fame announcer opened the ninth:

Three times in his sensational career has Sandy Koufax walked out to the mound to pitch a fateful ninth where he turned in a no-hitter. But tonight, September the 9th, nineteen hundred and sixty-five, he made the toughest walk of his career, I'm sure, because through eight innings he has pitched a perfect game.

He has struck out 11, he has retired 24 consecutive batters, and the first man he will look at is catcher Chris Krug, big right-hand hitter, flied to center, grounded to short.

Krug stood at the plate looking for redemption. His error had allowed the game's only run to score in the fifth inning after Lou Johnson walked, moved to second on a sacrifice bunt, and stole third. Krug's throw sailed into left field, and Johnson trotted home easily.

"I wasn't thinking about the perfect game, I was just thinking about hitting," Krug said.

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

Koufax threw two quick strikes.

And you can almost taste the pressure now. Koufax lifted his cap, ran his fingers through his black hair, then pulled the cap back down, fussing at the bill.

Koufax insists the only pressure he was feeling was about winning the game, the Dodgers having fallen a half-game behind their arch rivals, the first-place Giants.

"At that time, we were in a pennant race," Koufax said. "This was September and this was a one-run game."

Krug tapped a 1-2 pitch foul, and Scully took a moment to set the fielding alignment.

The Dodgers, defensively, in this spine-tingling moment — Sandy Koufax and Jeff Torborg. The boys who will try and stop anything hit their way: Wes Parker, Dick Tracewski, Maury Wills and John Kennedy; the outfield of Lou Johnson, Willie Davis and Ron Fairly.

And there's twenty-nine thousand people in the ballpark, and a million butterflies.

"Every city has their favorite broadcaster, but I think Vinnie was very special," Koufax said. "He painted pictures."

Koufax into his windup and the one-two pitch, fastball, fouled back out of play.

All the boys in the bullpen, straining to get a better look as they look through the wire fence in left field.

One-and-two the count to Chris Krug. Koufax, feet together, now to his windup and the 1-2 pitch, fastball outside, ball two.

The crowd booed, and Scully heard them.

A lot of people in the ballpark now are starting to see the pitches with their heart.

Finally, Koufax put Krug away.

Sandy reading signs, into his windup, 2-2 pitch, fastball, got him swinging!

Sandy Koufax has struck out twelve. He is two outs away from a perfect game.

You read that right — Scully said the words "perfect game" — not once, but twice — before it was over. Broadcaster jinx?

"I'm afraid I don't believe in that," Koufax said, laughing. "You know it [when you're pitching a no-hitter]. The [opposing team's] third base coach is telling you. The other team, every time you walk off the mound, they're trying to jinx you. If you pitch a no-hitter, you'll pitch a no-hitter, doesn't matter what anybody says to you."

Testing that theory next was pinch-hitter Joe Amalfitano. A big league infielder for 10 years, and later a longtime Dodgers coach, Amalfitano and Koufax are old friends. He

"WHATEVER VINNIE DID, EVERY NIGHT IT WAS JUST SOMETHING SPECIAL. HE WAS SO GOOD, IT WAS ALMOST BETTER LISTENING TO IT THAN DOING IT."

—KOUFAX ON SCULLY'S CALL

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calls the left-hander every Sept. 9 to reminisce and laugh about what happened in the final moments of the game.

The first pitch from Koufax was a fastball down the middle, and Amalfitano turned to home plate umpire Ed Vargo.

"Hey Ed, that ball sounded inside to me," Amalfitano said, getting a laugh out of both Vargo and Torborg.

Amalfitano knew how this would end, but Scully kept building the drama.

Sandy reading, into his windup and the strike-one pitch, curveball, tapped foul, 0-and-2. And Amalfitano walks away and shakes himself a little bit, and swings the bat. And Koufax with a new ball, takes a hitch at his belt and walks behind the mound.

I would think that the mound at Dodger Stadium is the loneliest place in the world.

"It's pretty hard to be lonely in front of 30,000 people," Koufax says now, with a laugh.

Looks in to get his sign, 0-and-2 to Amalfitano. The strike-two pitch to Joe, fastball, swung on and missed, strike three!

He is one out away from The Promised Land, and Harvey Kuenn is comin' up.

Kuenn was pinch-hitting for pitcher Bob Hendley, who had given up only one hit himself. This game still holds the record for fewest combined hits (one) in a nine-inning game.

Kuenn, a 10-time All-Star and former batting champ, sensed the inevitable. Walking to the plate, he passed Amalfitano and muttered, "Wait for me, I'll be right back."

From the start of the ninth inning, Scully decided to recite the time as well as the date. He explained in later years that emphasizing the exact moment in time was meant as a gift for Koufax in the future, sort of like a time capsule.

The time on the scoreboard is 9:44. The date, September the 9th, 1965.

Asked about the gesture, Koufax said, "All the years I talked to Vinnie, we had never talked about the game. This is the first time I heard about that. I appreciate what he did. But I didn't know anything about him doing that."

1-and-1 to Harvey Kuenn. Now he's ready. Fastball, high, ball two. You can't blame a man for pushing just a little bit now.

Scully focused his gaze on Koufax, expertly describing his every move.

Sandy backs off, mops his forehead, runs his left index finger along his forehead, dries it off on his left pants leg. All the while Kuenn just waiting.

JAE C. HONG/AP

Now Sandy looks in. Into his windup and the 2-1 pitch to Kuenn, swung on and missed, strike two.

And then, one pitch from perfection, the final call.

It is 9:46 p.m.

Two-and-two to Harvey Kuenn, one strike away. Sandy into his windup, here's the pitch … swung on and missed, a perfect game!

THE NEXT 38 SECONDS OF AUDIO WAS NOTHING BUT CROWD noise. When Scully finally took the mic again, he summed up the night as if they were lyrics to the final stanza of a classic poem.

On the scoreboard in right field it is 9:46 p.m. in the City of the Angels, Los Angeles, California. And a crowd of 29,139 just sitting in to see the only pitcher in baseball history to hurl four no-hit, no-run games. He has done it four straight years, and now he capped it. On his fourth no-hitter he made it a perfect game.

And Sandy Koufax, whose name will always remind you of strikeouts, did it with a flourish. He struck out the last six consecutive batters. So, when he wrote his name in capital letters in the record books, that K stands out even more than the O-U-F-A-X.

Scully's call of the perfect game is admired for both its beauty and its spontaneity.

"When you read it, it reads as if he was sweating blood and tears for hours getting it just right, but it was extemporaneous as it was happening," said Jon Miller, the Hall of Fame broadcaster, who was listening live that night as a 13-year-old in California. "That's what takes it into another realm past a regular broadcast and into something extraordinary, into a work of art."

"It's almost as if it's poetry," said Joe Davis, the Emmy award-winning play-by-play man who took over for Scully on Dodgers TV in 2017. "He wrote a beautiful baseball poem in real time as he covered a moment that, I can tell you, your heart gets racing."

"No matter what Vinnie did, it was pretty impressive," Koufax said. "I don't know if there's ever been anybody as good or even close." ◆

Sweeny Murti is a Senior Contributor at MLB.com. He previously spent more than two decades covering the New York Yankees for WFAN Radio in New York.

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The right words at the right time from the broadcast booth can amplify a moment to help it last forever.

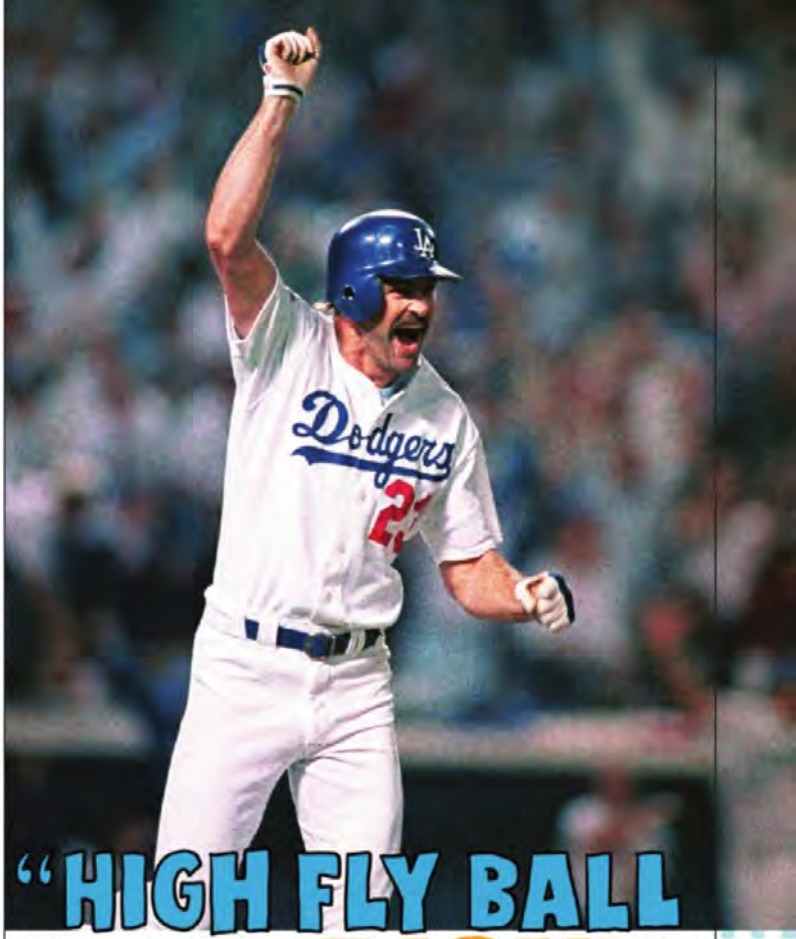
BY JASON FOSTER

A GREAT CALL OF A BIG PLAY CAN HELP ROCKET THE MOMENT TO ALL-TIME-GREAT STATUS. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN THE WORLD SERIES.

WHETHER THROUGH EXCITING WALK-OFFS, HOMAGES TO HALL OF FAMERS, OR SIMPLY PROVIDING IMPORTANT CONTEXT TO A FINAL PLAY, THE FALL CLASSIC HAS PRODUCED A HEALTHY DOSE OF CHILL-INDUCING CALLS FROM BROADCASTERS.

SOMETIMES THOSE CALLS SEEM ICONIC FROM THE MOMENT WE HEAR THEM. SOMETIMES WE REQUIRE SOME DISTANCE TO REALIZE THEIR TRUE GREATNESS. AND OTHER TIMES, IT TAKES US A WHILE TO DISCOVER THEM — BUT ONCE WE DO, WE CAN'T SEEM TO GET ENOUGH OF THEM.

HERE ARE 10 NOTABLE CALLS FROM BIG MOMENTS IN WORLD SERIES HISTORY.



"HIGH FLY BALL INTO RIGHT FIELD, SHE IS ... GONE!"

VIN SCULLY: KIRK GIBSON'S GAME 1 WALK-OFF HOMER (1988)

"High fly ball into right field, she is .... GONE!"

It's rare that a single moment produces multiple iconic calls. But Gibson's walk-off homer in Game 1 of the 1988 World Series was the kind of epic swing that provided such inspiration across multiple broadcast booths. Scully's call for NBC was heard by millions and has been the most replayed in the decades since.

In Scully's classic Hall of Fame style, his call of Gibson's homer off future Hall of Famer Dennis Eckersley is straightforward yet wrapped with the appropriate amounts of excitement and amazement as a hobbled Gibson pulls off, as Scully goes on to say, the impossible.

JACK BUCK: GIBSON'S WALK-OFF HOMER

"Gibson — swings and a fly ball to deep right field. This is gonna be a home run! Unbelievable! A home run for Gibson, and the Dodgers have won the game, 5-4. I don't believe what I just saw."

Like Scully, Buck was already a Hall of Fame broadcaster when he was tabbed to call the '88 World Series for CBS Radio. His call of Gibson's historic shot is filled not just with awe but with shock, as evidenced by the most famous line: "I don't believe what I just saw."

Buck says the line twice in succession (and actually says it a third time moments later, but it's usually not included in clips), driving home the point that what he'd just witnessed was so outlandish that it could've well been a hallucination. And if that weren't enough, he also asks partner Bill White in the full broadcast, "Is this really happening, Bill?!"

DON DRYSDALE : GIBSON'S WALK-OFF HOMER

"Here's the 3-2 pitch — and a drive hit to right field, WAY BACK, THIS BALL IS GONE!"

Drysdale was the third Hall of Famer calling Game 1 that night in 1988, though his Cooperstown credentials were based on his performance as an eight-time All-Star pitcher and former Cy Young winner. But for someone not trained in broadcasting, Drysdale was a gifted announcer with an eye for detail and a conversational style as he called games for local Dodgers radio.

When Gibson makes contact, Drysdale simply calls the play as he sees it — which includes bursting into the euphoric realization that the ball is going over the wall. He earlier framed the at-bat as a "Casey at the Bat" moment, which led to a perfect button on his call: "This crowd will not stop. They can't believe the ending. And this time, Mighty Casey did *not* strike out."

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"FREEMAN HITS A BALL, RIGHT FIELD. SHE IS ... GONE!"

JOE DAVIS: FREDDIE FREEMAN'S GAME 1 WALK-OFF GRAND SLAM (2024)

"Freeman hits a ball, right field. She is ... GONE!"

The parallels between Freeman's walk-off homer in 2024 and Gibson's are almost uncanny: Both in Game 1, both lefties, both hobbled, both at bat with their team trailing by one run and down to its final out, both launching a ball into the right-field seats. Davis, the Dodgers' regular announcer but working in his role as the main play-by-play guy for FOX, was well aware of the symmetry — and his call reflects that.

In an homage to Scully's call 36 years earlier, Davis excitedly lets viewers know that "she" is gone. Then, he makes an instant-classic introduction — "Gibby, meet Freddie" — and does yet another homage when he asks partner John Smoltz, "Would you say you don't believe what you just saw?"

JACK BUCK: KIRBY PUCKETT'S GAME 6 WALK-OFF HOMER (1991)

"Into deep left center, for Mitchell, and ... we'll see you tomorrow night."

By the time the Braves and Twins got to Game 6 of the 1991 Fall Classic, the series had already produced a high amount of tension. Three of the first five games had been decided by one run, with the winning run coming in the eighth inning or later each time. Game 6 ended up as the second of what would be three extra-inning games in the series.

So when Puckett connects off Charlie Leibrandt in the bottom of the 11th inning, Buck's now-iconic and matter-of-fact "we'll see you tomorrow night" seems to say, "Of course we're going to Game 7. Did you expect anything else?"

DANIEL SHIREY/MLB PHOTOS (FREEMAN); ELISE AMENDOLA/AP

BRAD MANGIN/MLB PHOTOS

JOE BUCK: DAVID FREESE'S GAME 6 WALK-OFF HOMER (2011)

"Freese hits it in the air to center. We will see you tomorrow night."

Twenty years and one day after his late father's call of Puckett's blast, Joe Buck was calling his own dramatic Game 6 for FOX in the 2011 World Series as the Cardinals twice came from the brink of elimination to beat the Rangers and force Game 7.

When Freese leads off the bottom of the 11th in a tie game — just like Puckett — and then connects for a walk-off homer — just like Puckett — the younger Buck sees an opportunity to honor his dad, and he nails it.

BOB COSTAS: YANKEES WIN 25TH TITLE TO CLOSE OUT THE 1900s (1999)

"A pop into shallow left. The New York Yankees — world champions, team of the decade, most successful franchise of the century"

Baseball in the 20th century was dominated by the Yankees, as multiple dynasties combined to win 25 World Series championships between 1923-1999. And the '90s were one of their most dominant decades — with three titles — despite not winning their first one until 1996, which is more than halfway through.

But when Mariano Rivera gets the Braves' Keith Lockhart to pop out to left to end the 1999 World Series in a sweep, Costas' call is simply a statement of relevant but important facts. He tells the story of the moment, the season, the decade and the entire 1900s with just 21 words.

"IT GETS THROUGH BUCKNER. HERE COMES KNIGHT AND THE METS WIN IT!"

JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES (YANKEES); MLB PHOTOS

TOM CHEEK: JOE CARTER'S SERIES-WINNING WALK-OFF HOMER (1993)

"Here's the pitch on the way. A swing and a belt! Left field, way back, Blue Jays win it! The Blue Jays are World Series champions. ... Touch 'em all, Joe. You'll never hit a bigger home run in your life."

Carter's walk-off homer in Game 6 of the 1993 World Series was just the second series-clinching walk-off homer in the history of the Fall Classic. The three-run shot off the Phillies' Mitch Williams came with two strikes and the Blue Jays down by a run and two outs from having to play a Game 7.

Cheek, who had called every game in Blue Jays history to that point, delivers a joyous call that is detailed yet succinct as Carter's drive sails over the wall near the left field corner to secure the team's second straight World Series championship. But it's the conclusion, as Carter completes his celebratory trot, that gives this call its beloved status.

VIN SCULLY: METS WALK OFF ON BILL BUCKNER'S ERROR (1986)

"Little roller up along first, BEHIND THE BAG. It gets through Buckner. Here comes Knight and the Mets win it!"

Before Game 6 of the 1986 World Series came to its famous (or infamous) end — with the Red Sox going from a strike away from a championship to a series of unfortunate events — Scully summed things up with a question that would soon take on even more weight: "Can you believe this ballgame at Shea?"

Literally 15 seconds later, Scully and the rest of the baseball world react with even more disbelief as Mookie Wilson hits a weak grounder toward first that rolls under Buckner's glove and allows Ray Knight to score the winning run from second base — and allows the Mets to stay alive and force Game 7.

MEL ALLEN: BILL MAZEROSKI'S GAME 7 WALK-OFF HOMER (1960)

"There's a drive hit to deep left field — look out, now — that ball is going, going, GONE! And the World Series is over! Mazeroski hits it over the left field fence for a home run and the Pirates win it, 10-9, and win the World Series."

The original broadcast of Game 7 of the 1960 World Series was thought to be lost to time until a pristine black-and-white recording of NBC's coverage was found in the wine cellar of famed singer — and former part-owner of the Pirates — Bing Crosby in 2009. When the game was aired on MLB Network in 2010, it was the first time the public had seen the original broadcast in 50 years.

On the call for the ninth inning as the Yankees and Pirates battle it out is Yankees broadcaster Mel Allen. His call immediately recognizes the rising level of excitement as Mazeroski drives the ball to left field. And Allen's mid-call interjection of "look out, now" has a really fun late '50s/early '60s vibe. ◆

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MARY DECICCO/MLB PHOTOS

First Class

A fab five of left-handed leaning, high-character trailblazers created a memorable Hall of Fame induction.

BY ANTHONY CASTROVINCE

The Baseball Hall of Fame Class of 2025 is one of the largest, most diverse, and historically significant classes to get inducted in years.

While there was a threat of rain throughout the day, you just had to figure that the baseball gods would not allow this revered class to have to have their ceremony moved indoors. Though delayed an hour, the decorated day on the dais for Ichiro Suzuki, CC Sabathia and Billy Wagner and the families of the late Dave Parker and Dick Allen went off without a hitch on the grounds of the Clark Sports Center.

With 52 living Hall of Famers on hand, these were some of the highlights — from touching tributes to humorous stories to Ichiro speaking English — of the ceremony honoring the Class of 2025.

Twenty-four years after he made an unprecedented move from Nippon Professional Baseball as MLB's first Japanese-born position player, Ichiro became the first Asian-born player to reach the Hall of Fame. The headliner of the day took a rare turn closing it out instead of leading things off.

Ichiro Suzuki

Ichiro also used this as a moment to show a wider audience how fluent he is at the English language, with a poignant and at times hysterical speech that included a shout-out to the one BBWAA voter who left him off the ballot.

"The offer for that writer to have dinner at my home has now expired," he said.

A player whose impact and influence cannot be overstated, especially given the increasing presence of Japanese stars on the Major League scene, Ichiro's Cooperstown moment attracted an immense fan presence, not unlike the attention he received in his early days with the Seattle Mariners in 2001 — the year he became just the second player (joining Boston's Fred Lynn in 1975) to be voted both MVP and Rookie of the Year in the same season.

Reflecting on that season led to the most poignant moment in Ichiro's speech.

"I think you can imagine, there was much doubt when I tried to become the first position player from Japan in MLB," he said. "But it was more than just that. There was criticism and negativity. Someone even said to me, 'Don't embarrass the nation.' The person who supported me the most was my wife, Yumiko.

"It would only be natural if she had doubts, too. But she never made me feel them. All of her energy was focused on supporting and encouraging me. For 19 seasons in Seattle, New York and Miami, she made sure that our home was always happy and positive. I tried to be consistent as a player. But she's the most consistent teammate I've ever had."

Still slender and spry at age 51, Ichiro, whose Hall plaque includes his Mariners cap, was recognized for being a human hit machine who reached the 3,000-hit club in MLB despite not debuting in the league until his age-27 season.

His speech was loaded with wise advice for young players about the difference between "dreams" and "goals" and how precision in preparation is so important.

"If you consistently do the little things, there is no limit to what you can achieve," he said. "Look at me. I'm 5'11" and 170 pounds. When I came to America, many people said I was too skinny to compete with bigger Major Leaguers. The first time I ran out on the field, I was in awe of the competition. But I knew if I stuck to my beliefs about preparation, I could overcome the doubts. Even my own."

BEN VANHOUTEN/MLB PHOTOS

CC Sabathia

Like Ichiro, Sabathia received his Hall pass on his first BBWAA ballot.

In a speech that was rooted in family and oriented around the women in his life, he highlighted his mother Margie and wife Amber.

"It's been a long road," he said, "and I wouldn't have made it this far without the women."

It was his mom who instilled in him a love of baseball, taking him to games at the Oakland Coliseum and even putting on catcher's gear to field his fastballs in the backyard.

"From her, I learned that if we are here and breathing, we can get through it," he said.

And in Amber, who Sabathia met when he was a junior in high school, Sabathia found a true partner.

"She knows how to navigate me like no one else does," Sabathia said.

A member of the Black Aces — a group of 15 African-American and African-Canadian pitchers to win at least 20 games in a season, Sabathia's 251 wins and 3,093 strikeouts stand out in a sport in which starting pitching longevity has been increasingly difficult to come by. Sabathia is one of only three left-handers in history with at least 250 wins and 3,000 Ks.

Sabathia took a moment in his speech to note that Parker was someone he grew up watching and how he wants young Black kids today to have those idols in baseball. That's why Sabathia is so involved in the game as a special assistant to Commissioner Rob Manfred and the Players Alliance.

Though he won a Cy Young for the Indians in 2007 and had a brief but incredible tenure putting the Brewers on his back in their 2008 run to the playoffs, the 45-year-old Sabathia went into the Hall as a Yankee, with whom he won the 2009 World Series and amassed 134 wins.

Billy Wagner

"Billy the Kid" knew how to close, and that extended to his experience on the ballot, as he achieved entry into Cooperstown on his 10th and final try.

Wagner is only the ninth relief pitcher to reach the Hall and the first lefty reliever. That last point is incredible, because he's a natural right-hander who only taught himself to throw left-handed when he broke his right arm playing neighborhood football as a boy. Wagner also dug himself out of childhood poverty in rural Virginia to overwhelm opponents at Division III Ferrum College and then dominate the late innings in MLB with his 100-mph fastball and wicked slider.

Wagner thanked his parents for teaching him to "never let your circumstances define you," and thanked his wife, Sarah, for her "strength, grace and love."

He also sent a message to athletes just like him.

"I wasn't the biggest and I wasn't supposed to be here," he said. "Perseverance isn't just a trait. It's a path to greatness."

With a 33.2 percent strikeout rate that ranks as the best by a pitcher with at least 900 innings, Wagner had steadily increasing support on the ballot before finally breaking through in 2025. In 16 seasons with the Astros, Phillies, Mets, Red Sox and Braves, he compiled 422 saves and 1,196 strikeouts in 903 innings. His 225 saves with Houston are a franchise record. He went into the hall with an Astros cap.

"Being up here today," he said, "I feel like my baseball life has come full circle."

ALEX TRAUTWIG/MLB PHOTOS (SABATHIA); RON VESELY/MLB PHOTOS

Dave Parker

Dave Parker II took over the speech duties for his late "Pops," who passed away just 29 days prior from complications from Parkinson's disease but not before penning much of his speech, including an acceptance poem, part of which reads:

I'm in the Hall now
You can't take that away
The statue better look nice
You know I've got a
pretty face

Parker had a terrific career and is best known as the heart and soul of the 1979 World Series champion "We Are Family" Pirates, whose logo is featured on his plaque.

"Dave Parker is a Bucco," Parker II said. "He holds Pittsburgh close to his heart."

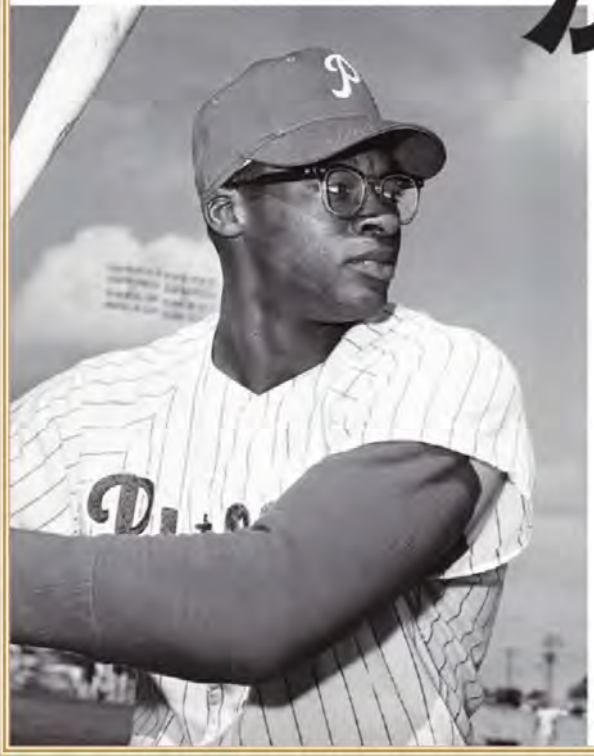
And the man who once said, "When the leaves turn brown, I'll be wearing the batting crown," left behind a salute for his wife of more than 35 years, Kellye, who "when the leaves turn brown did everything in her power to keep me around."

Parker's mission to defeat Parkinson's lives on via his Dave Parker39 Foundation.

Parker's poem closed with a final flourish:

To my friends,
families, I love you all
Thanks for sticking
by my side
I told you Cooperstown
Would be my last ride

Dick Allen



Allen passed away in 2020 at the age of 78 before he could finally see himself acknowledged as one of the game's important stars.

In her speech accepting the honor on her late husband's behalf, Willa Allen made sure that his legacy was about more than just his impressive numbers.

"It's about principle, passion and determination," she said.

Willa told the story about when, in 1971, a 16-year-old fan asked Allen for his autograph. Allen looked at the boy and said, "Son, I'd rather shake your hand."

"They stood there, just the two of them, for two full hours," Willa said. "That night, a friendship began."

The kid Allen took to calling "Baby Bro" is now a 70-year-old man who was there in attendance.

Allen went into the Hall as a member of the Philadelphia Phillies, with whom he won Rookie of the Year in 1964.

Though Dick Allen didn't live to see his rightful Hall induction, his wife made the crowd feel his presence.

"Thank you for finally bringing him home and believing in him," she said. ◆

LOUIS REQUENA/MLB PHOTOS (STARGELL); AP

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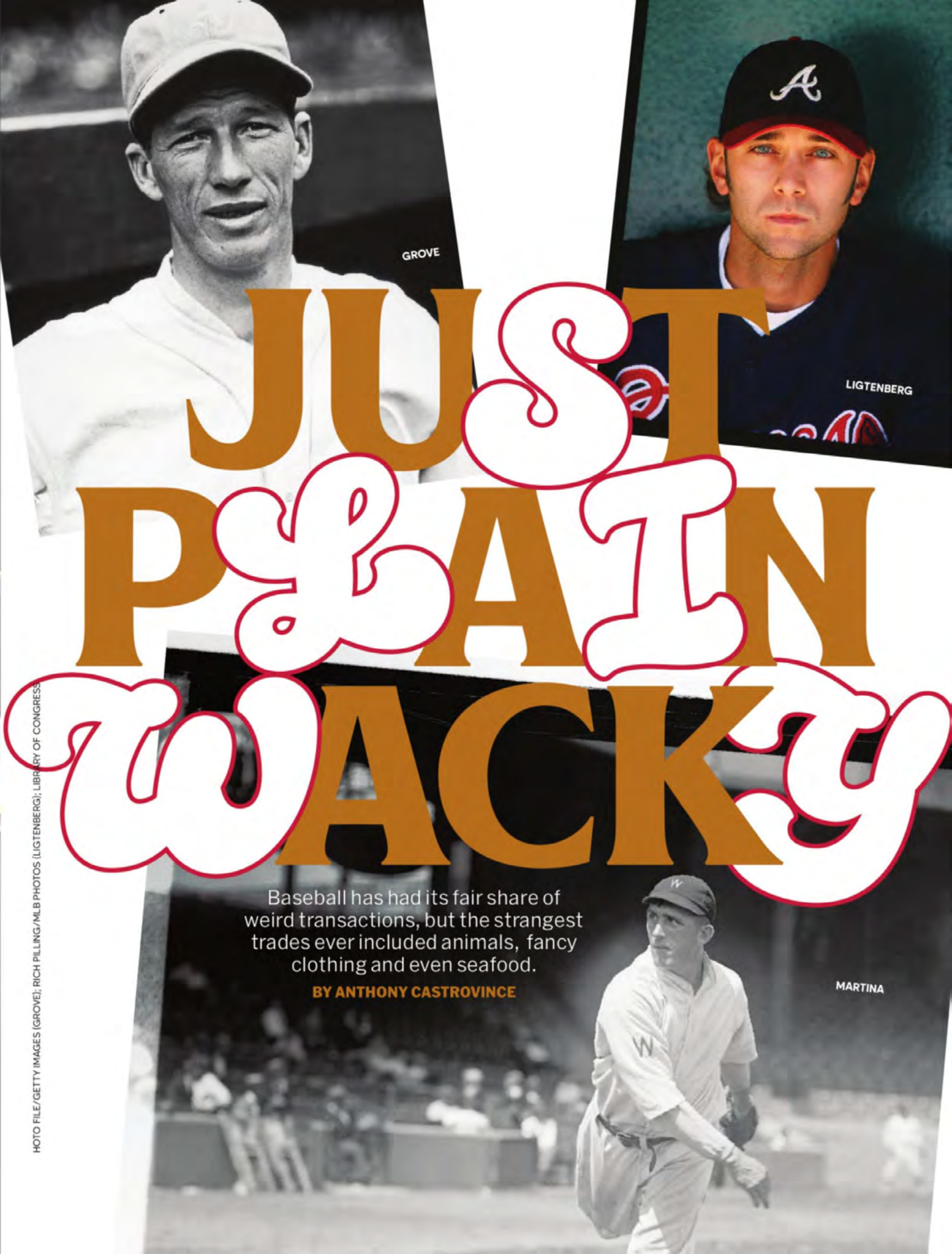
GROVE

LIGTENBERG

JUST PLAIN WACKY

Baseball has had its fair share of weird transactions, but the strangest trades ever included animals, fancy clothing and even seafood.

BY ANTHONY CASTROVINCE



MARTINA

PHOTO FILE/GETTY IMAGES (GROVE); RICH PILLING/MLB PHOTOS (LIGTENBERG); LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

WE'VE SEEN ALL KINDS OF STRANGE trades in baseball.

We've seen teams (Detroit and Cleveland) swap managers (Joe Gordon and Jimmy Dykes). We've seen a broadcaster (Ernie Harwell) traded for a player (Cliff Dapper). We've seen two guys (Max Flack and Cliff Heathcote) dealt for each other between games of a doubleheader. We've seen the likes of John McDonald, Dickie Noles and Harry Chiti traded for … themselves (they turned out to be the "player to be named" in deals that had briefly shipped them elsewhere).

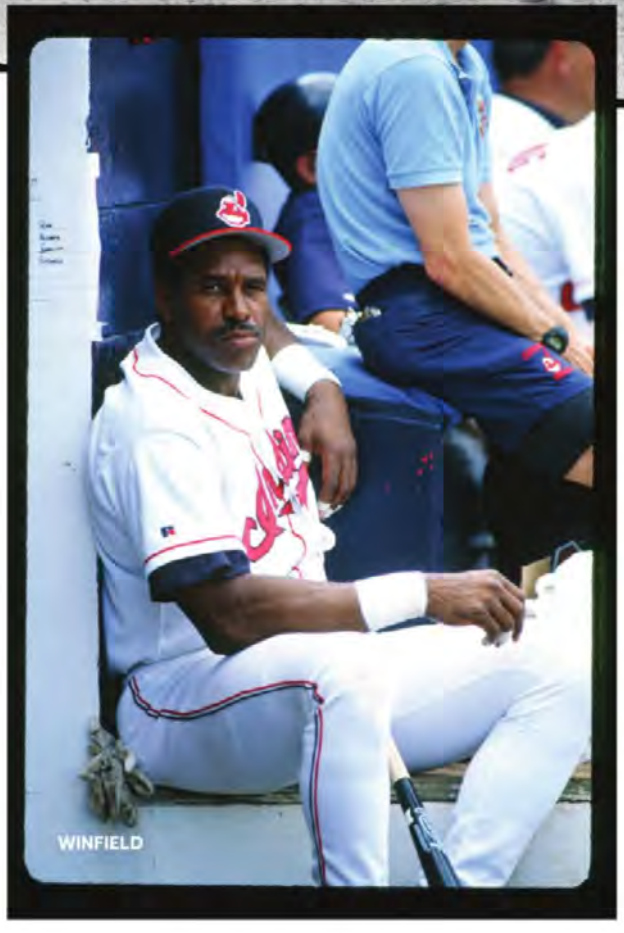
And if you want to get literal in the strange trades discussion, we've seen Lou Frazier traded for … Doug Strange.

The strangest trades, though, are when human players are dealt for animals, food or inanimate objects. With that as the theme, here are 10 of the strangest trades the sport has ever seen.

Lefty Grove for a fence

Grove pitched six games for the Martinsburg Mountaineers of the Blue Ridge League in 1920. He was sold to the Baltimore Orioles of the International League in June of that season for the sum of $3,500 — the cost to replace Martinsburg's outfield fence, which had been leveled by a storm.

The Orioles had Grove until selling him to the Philadelphia A's in 1925 for $100,600 (or $600 more than the Yankees paid for Babe Ruth). He went on to win 300 games and nine ERA titles. No word on how the fence held up.



Dave Winfield for dinner

The 1994 players' strike wiped out the end of the season and World Series, and it also brought us one of the oddest transactions in MLB history.

The strike began in mid-August, but the season was not canceled until mid-September. Until that happened, teams could still operate as if play would continue, and Cleveland — still holding out hope for a postseason run — swung a trade for Winfield just before the now defunct waiver trade deadline on Aug. 31. The club was supposed to get a player to be named from Minnesota, but because of the strike, that never happened. To settle things, Cleveland executives took Twins executives out for a nice dinner. If the steak was anywhere near as good as Winfield, it must have been a heck of a meal.

Tris Speaker for rent

The Boston Americans signed Speaker out of the Texas League in 1907, but he hit just .158 in seven games with Boston. With the organization rather uninterested in him at that point, Speaker had to pay his own way to the team's Little Rock, Ark., training camp in '08. And at the end of Spring Training,

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the Americans — who changed their name to the Red Sox — gave his contract to Little Rock's Southern Association team as payment for use of the field.

The only stipulation was that if Speaker developed, Boston had the right to repurchase him for $500. Well, he developed all right. Into a future Hall of Famer. The Red Sox got him back later in the year, and he wound up leading them to two World Series titles.

Johnny Jones for a live turkey

Jones never made it to the big leagues, but his name lives on in infamy as the player that Joe Engel, "The Barnum of the Bushes," traded for a turkey.

Jones was a light-hitting shortstop for the Chattanooga Lookouts, and he had drawn the ire of the local press. So in 1930, Engel sent him to the Charlotte Hornets of the Piedmont League in exchange for a 25-pound turkey that Engel declared was "having a better year." Engel had the bird cooked up for the Southern Baseball Writers' Association Dinner. Alas, the meat turned out to be a little tough, so it was decided that the Hornets had gotten the better end of that deal.

Kerry Ligtenberg for bats and balls

Undrafted out of college, Ligtenberg landed with the Minneapolis Loons of the independent Prairie League, pitching for $650 a month. In 1996, he was one class away from graduating from the University of Minnesota with an engineering degree and likely leaving baseball behind. But the Braves took an interest in him at the urging of Loons manager Greg Olson.

The Braves signed Ligtenberg, and assistant general manager Dean Taylor offered to compensate Olson for the find. Olson was practical enough to ask for what his club really needed — 12 dozen baseballs and two dozen bats. A steal of a deal for the Braves, for whom Ligtenberg went on to make 254 appearances over five seasons.

Keith Comstock for $100 and a bag of baseballs

This one is a step beyond the previous trade, because the left-handed Comstock actually had to deliver the baseballs himself.

Comstock had been toiling away in the Minors for quite a while and was with the A's when, in the spring of 1983, the Tigers showed interest in him. Detroit offered $100. When that didn't work, the Tigers sweetened the deal by throwing in the baseballs. Comstock wound up making it to the Majors in '84 and is now known not so much for getting traded for a bag of baseballs but for hilariously posing for a picture with one.

YOUNG

BETTMANN/GETTY

Joe Martina for oysters

Martina pitched just one season for the Washington Senators in 1924. But his name was not lost to history because of the '21 swap in which Dallas sent him to New Orleans for two barrels of oysters.

Because of that deal, Martina was forever known as "Oyster Joe."

Len Dondero for donuts ... almost

Dondero was an infielder with San Antonio in the Texas League in 1930. When Dallas owners George and Julius Schepps, who also owned a bakery, offered San Antonio owner Homer Hammonds a dozen donuts for Dondero, Hammonds bit. Literally. The owners from the two teams wound up sharing the donuts, and the deal was disallowed.

Cy Young for a suit

The Cleveland Spiders needed an arm, and owner Frank Robison decided to take a chance on Denton Young, who had put together a solid season with the Canton Nadjys (that's a type of horse, for the record) of the Tri-State League.

Young would inspire not only a great nickname ("Cy" for "Cyclone," a nod to the tenacity of his pitches) but also the game's most prestigious pitching award, named in his honor. And all it cost Robison to acquire him was about $250 or $300 (accounts vary) and a new suit for Canton's skipper.

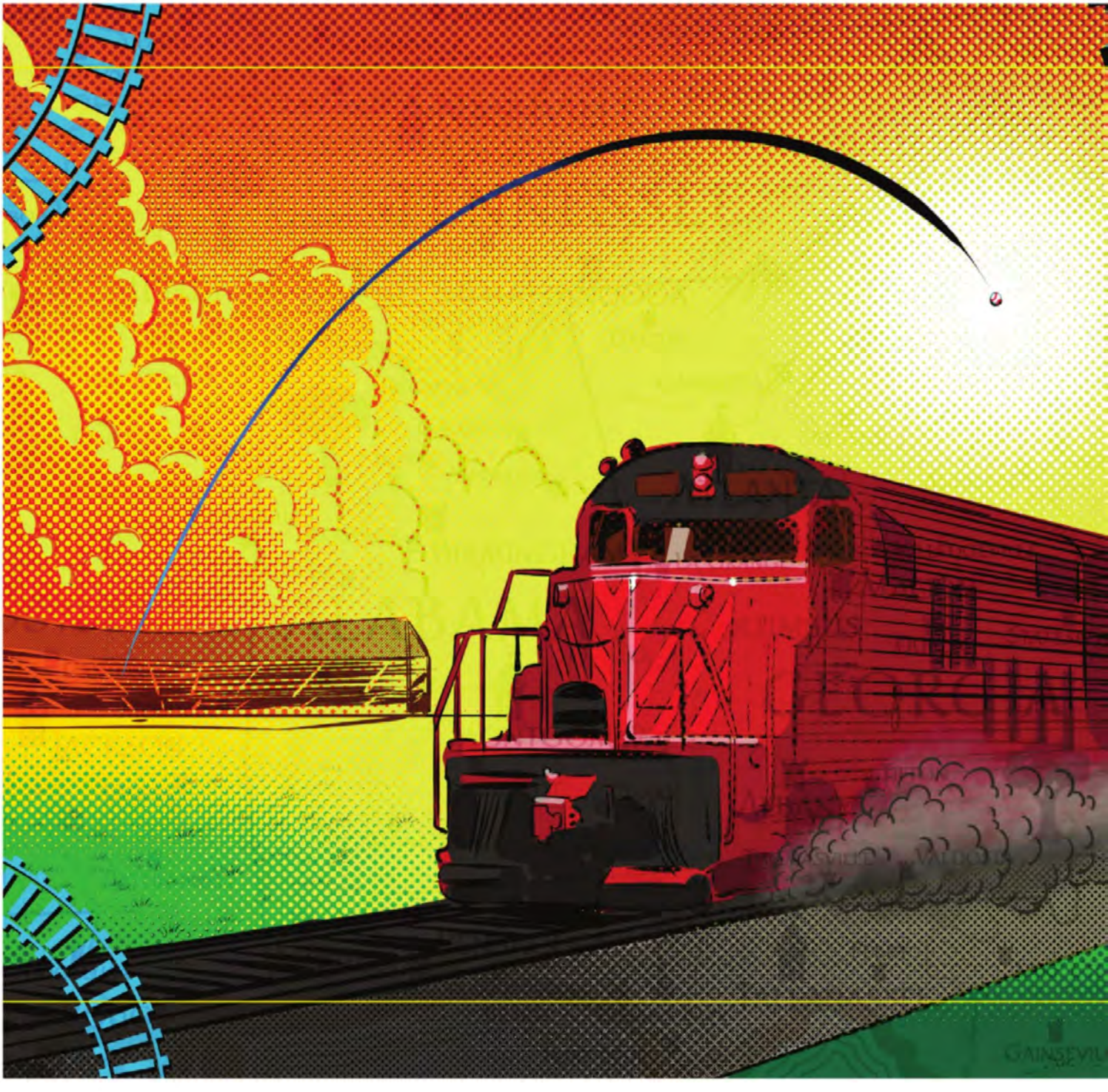
Mike Cisco for ... nothing

No word on whether George Costanza pitched this trade, but it happened during Spring Training 2013. At the time, Cisco, a 36th-round Draft pick in 2008 out of the University of South Carolina, was going nowhere in the Phillies' system, despite some solid numbers as a reliever in Double-A and Triple-A the previous year. The Angels needed organizational help, and the Phillies let them have Cisco as a goodwill gesture.

Every so often, you'll hear about a guy being dealt for a dollar just so that something is entered into the transaction system. But "no compensation" is a rarer return. Cisco never reached the big leagues, but he put up a 3.99 ERA in Double-A in his lone year with the Angels, which is … better than nothing? ◆

Anthony Castrovince has been a reporter for MLB.com since 2004.

A LONG



LONG BALL

ILLUSTRATION BY BENJAMIN MARRA

This home run ball in 1954 just might have traveled farther than any other dinger in history ... more than 500 miles.

BY MATT MONAGAN

AT THE 40TH ANNUAL HOME RUN Derby at Truist Park in Atlanta in July, big Oneil Cruz brought his colossal power to the contest, The Big Dumper, Cal Raleigh, dumped ball after ball over the stands on his way to victory, and hometown hero Matt Olson aimed at the Chop House and beyond in right field.

But nobody, not any one of these premier tater-mashers, came close to the longest homer in professional baseball history — resulting from a swing from way back in 1954.

"Bob Montag finds a Norfolk and Southern employee on the sidewalk and he's holding in his hand a baseball that's covered in old dust and soot," Tim Darnell, author of *The Crackers: Early Days of Atlanta Baseball*, said. "And Montag can barely make out what's written on the baseball. It says: 'Atlanta to Nashville to Atlanta, 518 miles.' The longest home run in organized professional baseball history."

Montag nearly never played pro ball.

He fought in World War II in his early '20s, winning a Bronze Star and Purple Heart. But he was so severely hurt, doctors warned even the simplest of daily activities would be doubtful.

"He was told he would never walk again," Darnell said.

But somehow, the Cincinnati high school standout not only re-learned how to walk, but re-learned how to crush baseballs.

Montag signed a contract with the Ogden Reds, a Reds Pioneer League affiliate, in 1946 at the age of 23. He played for 10 different teams and eight different leagues over 14 years. He never made it to the Majors, but in the Minors, he became a sort of tall baseball tale.

He blasted 223 total homers, while putting up a .251/.374/.454 slash line. He had the best batting average in all of pro ball in 1949 with the Pawtucket Slaters (a Boston Braves affiliate), hitting an absurd .423 with 21 homers, 91 RBIs, 43 steals and a .720 slugging percentage. He moved on to the Atlanta Crackers and hit the most homers (113) in team history, second in Southern Association League history. In 1954 for Atlanta, he hit a single-season record 39 dingers.

"He was one of the most popular Atlanta Crackers of all time," Darnell said. "Very recognizable, an Atlanta fixture after he retired."

"The fans were so good to me that no place else could be home again," Montag once told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. "I used to get a bigger hand for hitting a fly ball than other guys would get for hitting a home run."

And during that record-setting year of 1954 for the Crackers, Montag did something that solidified him as the "Babe Ruth of the Southern Association League."

The Crackers played at Ponce De Leon Park, about a 20-minute drive from Truist Park. It was beautiful, but also, quirky. For decades, there was a magnolia tree in play 462 feet away in center field. Eddie Matthews and Babe Ruth got fly balls stuck in there. The stadium is gone now, but the old magnolia remains.

A rail line also ran along the right-field fence more than 400 feet from home plate. Conductors often slowed down or stopped the train to take in the ballgame.

"Yeah, you can actually walk along the site of where the Norfolk and Southern railroad train tracks were," Darnell said. "You can stand there and imagine what it must have been like to have a concrete and steel, double-decker Minor League ballpark — standing on what is now a Home Depot and a Whole Foods."

And on a humid Georgia afternoon, against either the Mobile Baybears or the Mobile Bears, Montag crushed one way, way up to where you'd be standing. Over the right-field bleachers, over the low fence in front of the railroad, over everything. So far that nobody even knew what happened to it.

"Nobody really sees where the ball goes," Darnell said. "It goes to right field, past the magnolia tree and disappears."

Days later, Montag and his team find out what really happened to the homer.

"It lands in a passing railroad car," Darnell said. "A train heading out to Nashville, Tennessee."

A Norfolk and Southern rail train had stopped to take in the game and, unbeknownst to the conductor, the ball landed in one of the cars. It then took off for Tennessee and once it arrived in Nashville, the ball was discovered buried in coal.

The train eventually came back to Atlanta, and when it did, the conductor contacted one of the Crackers' traveling secretaries to see Montag. The slugger met the conductor out on the sidewalk of Ponce De Leon Avenue and, well, was a bit surprised by what he found: The slugger was presented with his home run ball from days before — a hit that had traveled 518 miles across two states — on which to etch his signature.

Maybe, quite possibly, the longest home run ever.

"We don't know where the ball wound up, with the team or with the employee of the railroad who had it, but this is a pretty verifiable circumstance in baseball history," Darnell said.

Sure, there have been other tales of home runs rocketing out onto trains, on board ships or into alligator ponds, but this one seems a bit more believable.

TOP: AN ATLANTA CRACKERS SLUGGER WHO WAS INJURED IN WWII AND RECEIVED A PURPLE HEART, MONTAG (RIGHT) LAUNCHED "THE 500-MILE HOMER" AT PONCE DE LEON PARK.

First, as Darnell relayed, the tracks were around 400-450 feet away in right, reachable by premier sluggers like Montag. It's physically possible. And trains did routinely stop to take in games, letting passengers off just near the rail-lines. Old Cracker fans claimed they used to sit out by the box cars when Montag came to the plate. A tough target, but possible.

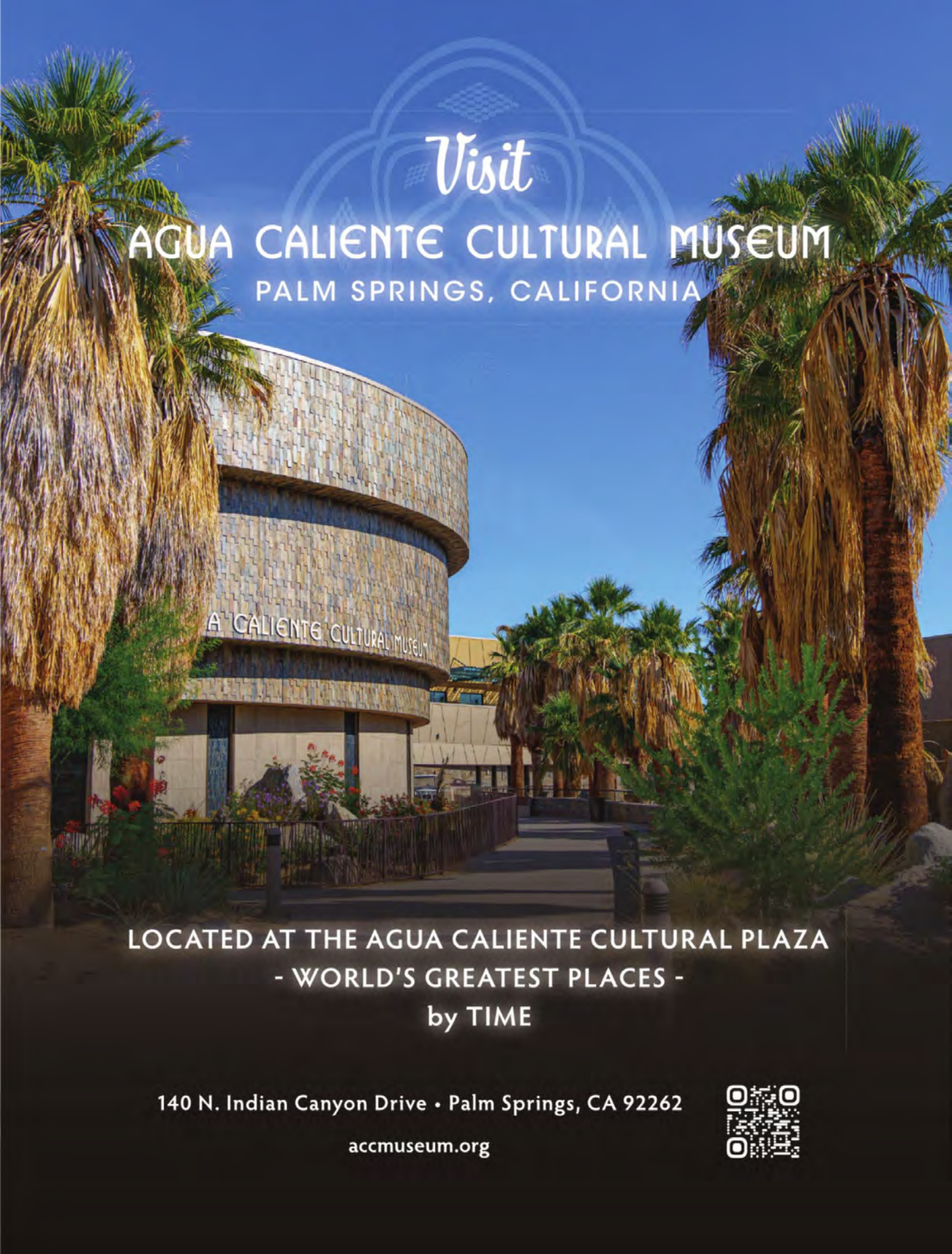
Secondly, Atlanta is a city made for long, high homers. The old Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium, where Hank Aaron broke the all-time home run record, was known as "The Launching Pad." Truist Park has the third-highest elevation in baseball. The humid Georgia summers make for an extremely fly-ball inducing climate.

Finally, what's the harm in believing it happened?

"Let's put it like this, if it didn't really happen, it's one hell of a story," Darnell laughed. "How are you gonna prove nowadays that it didn't?" ◆

Matt Monagan is a writer for MLB.com.

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES (LENNON); WIKIMEDIA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2026 WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC

DANIEL SHIREY/MLB PHOTOS

The World Baseball Classic returns in 2026, and here are some reasons to get excited about it right now.

BY MICHAEL CLAIR

Daisuke Matsuzaka carving up batters en route to back-to-back MVP Awards; Nelson Cruz's triumphant blast; Adam Jones' leaping home run robbery; Javier Báez's no-look tag; and Shohei Ohtani vs. Mike Trout with the championship on the line — these are just some of the World Baseball Classic's indelible moments that live on in our memories.

Start getting ready for the next must-see plays, because the World Baseball Classic will be back in 2026, including the four teams that advanced from the Qualifiers: Colombia (Pool A), Brazil (Pool B), Chinese Taipei (Pool C) and Nicaragua (Pool D).

This will be the sixth World Baseball Classic overall and the second with a 20-team field, so just like in 2023, there will be four pools of five teams. The top two teams in each pool will advance to the quarterfinals in Houston and Miami on March 13 and 14.

The semifinals and finals will be held in Miami beginning on March 15.

Let's break down the pools:

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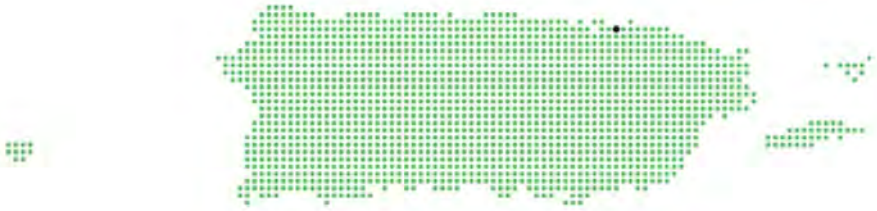
POOL A

San Juan, Puerto Rico: Hiram Bithorn Stadium

DATES: March 6-11, 2026



COUNTRY: Puerto Rico
2023 FINISH: Knocked out in quarterfinals by Mexico
WBSC RANKING: 7

Following back-to-back second-place finishes, Puerto Rico was hoping to finally lift the championship trophy in 2023. Unfortunately, a freak leg injury early in the tournament to All-Star closer Edwin Díaz seemingly set the tone for P.R., which lost to Mexico, 5-4, in the quarterfinals. Tigers All-Star Javier Báez, who was named to the 2023 All-World Baseball Classic Team, was 7-for-19 with one home run and six RBIs.

Puerto Rican pitchers also threw the first perfect game in WBC tournament history — a combined effort against Israel.

COUNTRY: Cuba
2023 FINISH: Tied 3rd with Mexico, lost in semifinals to USA
WBSC RANKING: 12

After advancing from a five-way Pool A tie as the winners thanks to the best run differential, Cuba narrowly defeated Australia, 4-3, in the 2023 quarterfinals. Cuba's run ended in Miami, though, as it lost a tough 14-2 game to the United States. Pitcher Luis Romero was named to the All-World Baseball Classic Team after striking out 13 batters and posting a 2.08 ERA in 8 2/3 innings pitched.

COUNTRY: Canada
2023 FINISH: 3rd in Pool B
WBSC RANKING: 20

Second baseman Edouard Julien was unstoppable in pool play for Canada in 2023: The Twins slugger went 7-for-13 with two home runs and five walks — good for a 1.154 OPS — as Canada went 2-2 and finished third in Pool B. Team manager Ernie Whitt is hopeful for the future though, saying "I'm very excited about it. We have good young players that are coming," following Canada's exit from the 2023 tournament. Owen Caissie, the highest drafted Canadian outfielder ever, figures to be on the team.

COUNTRY: Panama
2023 FINISH: 4th in Pool A
WBSC RANKING: 9

After qualifying for its first tournament since 2009, Panama impressed with a 2-2 finish in Pool A in 2023. An impressive victory over Chinese Taipei (12-5) and a 2-0 shutout of Italy, with Harold Arauz pitching four shutout frames to lead the way, guaranteed Panama a spot in the 2026 tournament. It'll look to advance beyond the group stage for the first time in WBC history.

COUNTRY: Colombia
2023 FINISH: 1-3, last place in Pool C
WBSC RANKING: 13

After defeating Mexico, 5-4, to start the 2023 Classic, Colombia dropped its next three games to finish in last place and be relegated to the Qualifiers. The team left nothing to chance at the Tucson Qualifiers in March, though, sweeping the competition and giving up just one run along the way.

"I know what happened two years ago," third baseman Gio Urshela said. "We feel really bad about it. Now this year, hopefully we'll be better."

Colombia has plenty of talent, but it will face an uphill campaign in San Juan: Not only will Puerto Rico, Cuba and Panama offer plenty of competition, but Colombia will have a rematch with Canada, which beat them, 5-0, in 2023.

ROMERO

DANIEL SHIREY/WBCI/MLB PHOTOS

GAME TO WATCH | CUBA VS. PUERTO RICO, MARCH 9 | A MATCHUP OF TWO BASEBALL POWERHOUSES. THIS WILL BE THE FIRST TIME THE TWO TEAMS WILL FACE OFF SINCE THE 2006 WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC. THEY SPLIT THEIR MATCHUPS IN THAT ONE.

POOL B

Houston: Daikin Park

DATES: March 6-11, 2026

COUNTRY: USA
2023 FINISH: 2nd, lost to Japan in finals
WBSC RANKING: 3

One run and Shohei Ohtani on the mound was all that separated the United States from back-to-back World Baseball Classic titles in 2023. The U.S. needed some late-inning heroics — Trea Turner's grand slam — to defeat Venezuela, 9-7, in the quarterfinals. Turner tied a WBC tournament record with five home runs.

COUNTRY: Mexico
2023 FINISH: Tied 3rd with Cuba, lost to Japan in semifinals
WBSC RANKING: 5

Mexico was leading Japan, 5-4, going into the bottom of the ninth before the eventual champions broke through with a game-winning double from star third baseman Munetaka Murakami. Led by Randy Arozarena, Mexico raced to its best performance in 2023. The finish has been a boon to baseball in the country, leading to higher attendances and more youth participation and making the future look very bright.

COUNTRY: Italy
2023 FINISH: Tied for 5th, lost to Japan in quarterfinals
WBSC RANKING: 14

Inspired by manager Mike Piazza's "Mission Classic" designed to bridge the gap between the team's Italian-American players and those developed in the country, Italy held its own against Japan in the quarterfinal before eventually losing, 9-3. Piazza has talked about wanting to further develop baseball within Italy, hoping to feature more Italian-born players in future tournaments.

To date, there have been only nine Italian-born players in MLB history.

COUNTRY: Great Britain
2023 FINISH: Fourth place in Pool C
WBSC RANKING: 17

After reaching its first World Baseball Classic tournament in history, Great Britain and its star catcher Harry Ford (two homers in group play) did what they needed to do: With a 7-5 victory over Colombia, Team GB cemented its place in the 2026 edition of the tournament.

"When you're managing a national team, you're not playing for one game or one season — you're playing for generations," manager Drew Spencer said at the time. "So what this means is that when we got to Regensburg and we qualified on our third attempt, it felt like the end of Chapter 1. This is the beginning of Chapter 2 for Great Britain baseball and British baseball in general."

COUNTRY: Brazil
2023 FINISH: Did not advance from Qualifiers
WBSC RANKING: 21

After falling to Nicaragua in the 2022 Qualifier final, Brazil took care of business with a 6-4 win against Germany at the Tucson Qualifiers to return to the main tournament for the first time since 2013. Brazil's veterans led the way, as Lucas Rojo returned from retirement and national team star Leonardo Reginatto continued to shine with a .510/.576/.667 batting line. Reginatto has played in every World Baseball Classic and Qualifier game in Brazil's history and holds the record with 26 hits across the various Qualifier tournaments.

"It's very important to us to qualify," Reginatto said. "This is something that can change baseball down there. We had a lot of people watching and cheering for us. I can't play this game too long anymore, but I'm very glad to finish my career like this. I mean, this is a dream come true."

ROB TRINGALI/WBCI/MLB PHOTOS

GAME TO WATCH | MEXICO VS. USA, MARCH 9 | WE'VE SEEN THIS MATCHUP PLENTY OF TIMES IN INTERNATIONAL SOCCER AND THE ATMOSPHERE IS ALWAYS INCREDIBLE. NOW, WE'LL GET TO SEE THE RIVALS FACE OFF IN GROUP PLAY.

POOL C

Tokyo, Japan: Tokyo Dome

DATES: March 5-10, 2026

COUNTRY: Japan
2023 FINISH: 1st
WBSC RANKING: 1

It's international baseball's best team: Japan is the only team to win multiple World Baseball Classic titles and now it's taken three. Its women's team recently won its seventh consecutive Women's Baseball World Cup, too, making Samurai Japan the team to beat in 2026.

Shohei Ohtani earned All-World Baseball Classic Team honors at both DH and pitcher, while outfielder Masataka Yoshida also earned All-World Baseball Classic honors.

COUNTRY: Australia
2023 FINISH: Lost to Cuba in quarterfinals
WBSC RANKING: 10

Suffice to say, Australia probably doesn't want to play Cuba anymore. Australia lost, 4-3, to the island nation in group play in 2017 and lost by the same score in '23. Manager Dave Nilsson played to his team's strength in '23, often letting his pitchers go through the order only one time to keep opposing batters off guard.

Team captain and firefighter Tim Kennelly helped lead the way with a home run and some sparkling defensive plays in the outfield, before setting the all-time ABL home run record this past winter.

COUNTRY: Korea
2023 FINISH: 3rd place in Pool B
WBSC RANKING: 4

It was a disappointing finish in 2023 for Korea, which has failed to advance beyond pool play since its second-place finish in 2009. Braves shortstop Ha-Seong Kim hit three home runs and Giants outfielder Jung Hoo Lee was 6-for-14 with five RBIs, but a leaky bullpen doomed Korea in losses to Japan and Australia. It'll look to get back on the medal stage in '26.

COUNTRY: Czechia
2023 FINISH: 4th place in Pool B
WBSC RANKING: 15

The beloved underdogs in the 2023 tournament, Czechia upset a heavily favored Spain team in the Regensburg Qualifiers and needed a go-ahead home run in the ninth inning from Martin Mužik to defeat China. That victory earned the team — made up almost entirely of homegrown players that must balance day jobs alongside their baseballing duties — a spot in the 2026 tournament. Could this small Central European nation make even more history this time around?

COUNTRY: Chinese Taipei
2023 FINISH: 2-2, last-place tie in Pool A
WBSC RANKING: 2

After upsetting Japan to win the Premier12 and collect a gold medal for the first time in team history, Chinese Taipei averted disaster at the Qualifier it hosted inside the Taipei Dome when it defeated Spain to finish second in the pool.

It should have plenty of talent come next year, especially as the team won't need to worry about calling on players for multiple tournaments. (D-backs prospect Yu-Min Lin was not available for the Qualifier after being the winning pitcher in the Premier12's gold-medal game.) Chinese Taipei will need to take down Japan again; Korea, which is hoping to bounce back from a rough '23; and the up-and-coming teams from Australia and the Czech Republic.

DANIEL SHIREY/WBCI/MLB PHOTOS

GAME TO WATCH | CZECHIA VS. JAPAN, MARCH 10 | JAPAN DEFEATED CZECHIA, 10-2, IN 2023, BUT MOST PEOPLE REMEMBER THE GAME FOR OTHER REASONS: LIKE WHEN ELECTRICAL ENGINEER ONDREJ SATORIA STRUCK OUT SHOHEI OHTANI.

POOL D

Miami: loanDepot park

DATES: March 6-11

COUNTRY: Venezuela
2023 FINISH: Lost to the U.S. in the quarterfinals
WBSC RANKING: 6

Venezuela blitzed its way through pool play in 2023, going 4-0 and giving up just nine runs despite facing the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Israel and Nicaragua. Venezuela nearly knocked off the United States, too, leading 7-5 in the eighth inning before the Turner grand slam.

Catcher Salvador Perez earned a spot on the All-World Baseball Classic Team after going 6-for-14 with one home run, six RBIs and five runs scored. A rotation fronted by Astros pitcher Luis Garcia and Twins hurler Pablo López helped make the team a threat against any offense.

COUNTRY: Dominican Republic
2023 FINISH: 3rd place in Pool D
WBSC RANKING: 11

The D.R. was a pre-tournament favorite in 2023 thanks to a stacked lineup led by the likes of Vladimir Guerrero Jr., Manny Machado and Juan Soto and a rotation fronted by Sandy Alcantara and Cristian Javier. But a 5-1 loss to Venezuela to start pool play and a 5-2 loss to Puerto Rico to end it meant that the Dominican Republic failed to advance from the group stage for the first time since '09. Soto did all he could, blasting two home runs and drawing three walks to put up an OPS of 1.500 in the tournament.

COUNTRY: Netherlands
2023 FINISH: 3rd place in Pool A
WBSC RANKING: 8

After a 2-0 start to pool play, the Kingdom of the Netherlands looked to be ready to repeat its performances from the previous two tournaments — when the team finished fourth. But after losses to Italy and Chinese Taipei — leading to a five-way tie in Pool A — the Netherlands found itself on the outside looking in. Ageless wonder Shairon Martis — who threw the first no-hitter in tournament history — returned in this one and threw 3 1/3 shutout innings.

COUNTRY: Israel
2023 FINISH: 4th place in Pool D
WBSC RANKING: 22

After a Cinderella run in 2017, Israel couldn't repeat the performance in '23. The team beat Nicaragua, 3-1, for its only victory of the tournament. Orioles pitcher Dean Kremer — the first Israeli player drafted in MLB history — held his own with four shutout innings in the tournament.

COUNTRY: Nicaragua
2023 FINISH: 0-4, last in Pool D
WBSC RANKING: 16

Good luck to any hitter who must face Nicaragua's pitching staff. Led by starter Ronald Medrano, Nicaragua held the opposition to just two runs and a .165 average in the Taipei Qualifier, pulling off back-to-back extra-inning victories before topping Chinese Taipei, 6-0, to finish with a 3-0 record.

The team will be back for its second WBC appearance, hoping for its first win in tournament history. Nicaragua will need to find some more offense before the 2026 tournament: They scored just one run in each contest in the '23 tournament. ◆

Michael Clair writes for MLB.com, with a focus on international baseball and the World Baseball Classic. Follow him @michaelsclair and subscribe to the International Beat newsletter.

MARTIS

YUKI TAGUCHI/WBCI/MLB PHOTOS

GAME TO WATCH | VENEZUELA VS. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, MARCH 11 | TWO OF BASEBALL'S BEST TEAMS WILL FACE OFF FOR THE FINAL GAME OF POOL PLAY. PERHAPS THEY'LL BE PLAYING JUST FOR SEEDING. OR PERHAPS THIS WILL BE A MUST-WIN GAME.

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WORLD SERIES MEMORIES

EARL McNEELY, SENATORS

Game 7, 1924 World Series

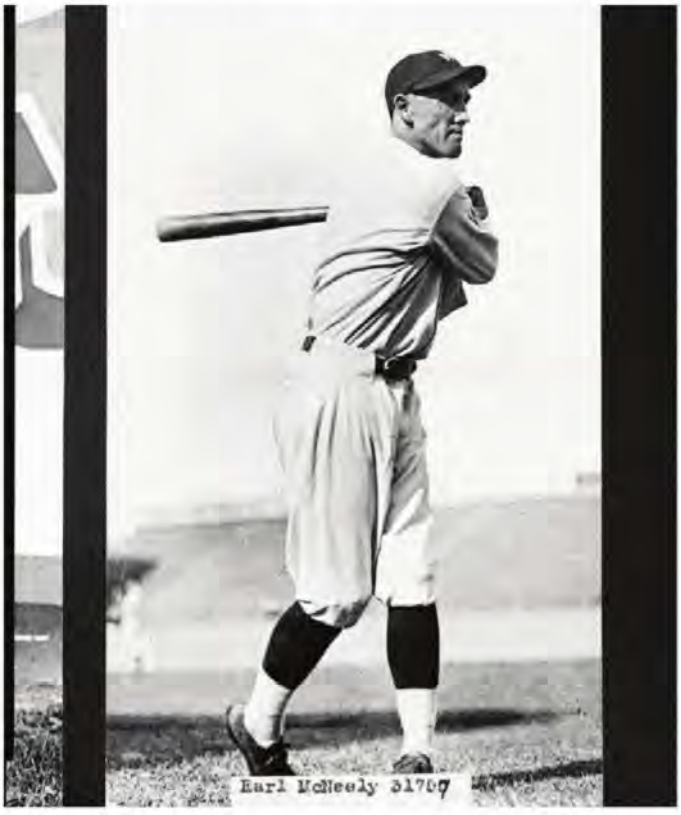
Walk-off double, 12th inning

"Sanity cracked with the crack of McNeely's bat," *The Washington Herald* gushed after Washington won its first World Series in franchise history.

McNeely, a 26-year-old rookie, notched the first title-clinching, walk-off hit in Fall Classic history and ended the longest Game 7 (in terms of innings) in postseason history with his double in the bottom of the 12th inning. Walter Johnson's four scoreless innings in relief, and a double and two errors, including one on a pop-up in foul territory, set up McNeely's heroics. He hit a groundball past Giants third baseman Freddie Lindstrom to score the winning run.

Washington fans were especially ecstatic that McNeely's hit secured Johnson's first championship. He was in the 18th season of a 21-year Hall of Fame career.

"I do not recollect a more exciting World Series than that which has finished this afternoon," said President Cavlin Coolidge, who was in attendance.



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WORLD SERIES YEAR BY YEAR

1903		**1916**	
Boston Americans (AL)	5	Boston Red Sox (AL)	4
Pittsburgh Pirates (NL)	3	Brooklyn Robins (NL)	1
1905		**1917**	
New York Giants (NL)	4	Chicago White Sox (AL)	4
Philadelphia Athletics (AL)	1	New York Giants (NL)	2
1906		**1918**	
Chicago White Sox (AL)	4	Boston Red Sox (AL)	4
Chicago Cubs (NL)	2	Chicago Cubs (NL)	2
1907		**1919**	
Chicago Cubs (NL)	4	Cincinnati Reds (NL)	5
Detroit Tigers (AL)	0	Chicago White Sox (AL)	3
1908		**1920**	
Chicago Cubs (NL)	4	Cleveland Indians (AL)	5
Detroit Tigers (AL)	1	Brooklyn Robins (NL)	2
1909		**1921**	
Pittsburgh Pirates (NL)	4	New York Giants (NL)	5
Detroit Tigers (AL)	3	New York Yankees (AL)	3
1910		**1922**	
Philadelphia Athletics (AL)	4	New York Giants (NL)	4
Chicago Cubs (NL)	1	New York Yankees (AL)	0
1911		**1923**	
Philadelphia Athletics (AL)	4	New York Yankees (AL)	4
New York Giants (NL)	2	New York Giants (NL)	2
1912		**1924**	
Boston Red Sox (AL)	4	Washington Senators (AL)	4
New York Giants (NL)	3	New York Giants (NL)	3
1913		**1925**	
Philadelphia Athletics (AL)	4	Pittsburgh Pirates (NL)	4
New York Giants (NL)	1	Washington Senators (AL)	3
1914		**1926**	
Boston Braves (NL)	4	St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	4
Philadelphia Athletics (AL)	0	New York Yankees (AL)	3
1915		**1927**	
Boston Red Sox (AL)	4	New York Yankees (AL)	4
Philadelphia Phillies (NL)	1	Pittsburgh Pirates (NL)	0

1928		**1944**	
New York Yankees (AL)	4	St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	4
St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	0	St. Louis Browns (AL)	2
1929		**1945**	
Philadelphia Athletics (AL)	4	Detroit Tigers (AL)	4
Chicago Cubs (NL)	1	Chicago Cubs (NL)	3
1930		**1946**	
Philadelphia Athletics (AL)	4	St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	4
St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	2	Boston Red Sox (AL)	3
1931		**1947**	
St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	4	New York Yankees (AL)	4
Philadelphia Athletics (AL)	3	Brooklyn Dodgers (NL)	3
1932		**1948**	
New York Yankees (AL)	4	Cleveland Indians (AL)	4
Chicago Cubs (NL)	0	Boston Braves (NL)	2
1933		**1949**	
New York Giants (NL)	4	New York Yankees (AL)	4
Washington Senators (AL)	1	Brooklyn Dodgers (NL)	1
1934		**1950**	
St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	4	New York Yankees (AL)	4
Detroit Tigers (AL)	3	Philadelphia Phillies (NL)	0
1935		**1951**	
Detroit Tigers (AL)	4	New York Yankees (AL)	4
Chicago Cubs (NL)	2	New York Giants (NL)	2
1936		**1952**	
New York Yankees (AL)	4	New York Yankees (AL)	4
New York Giants (NL)	2	Brooklyn Dodgers (NL)	3
1937		**1953**	
New York Yankees (AL)	4	New York Yankees (AL)	4
New York Giants (NL)	1	Brooklyn Dodgers (NL)	2
1938		**1954**	
New York Yankees (AL)	4	New York Giants (NL)	4
Chicago Cubs (NL)	0	Cleveland Indians (AL)	0
1939		**1955**	
New York Yankees (AL)	4	Brooklyn Dodgers (NL)	4
Cincinnati Reds (NL)	0	New York Yankees (AL)	3
1940		**1956**	
Cincinnati Reds (NL)	4	New York Yankees (AL)	4
Detroit Tigers (AL)	3	Brooklyn Dodgers (NL)	3
1941		**1957**	
New York Yankees (AL)	4	Milwaukee Braves (NL)	4
Brooklyn Dodgers (NL)	1	New York Yankees (AL)	3
1942		**1958**	
St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	4	New York Yankees (AL)	4
New York Yankees (AL)	1	Milwaukee Braves (NL)	3
1943		**1959**	
New York Yankees (AL)	4	Los Angeles Dodgers (NL)	4
St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	1	Chicago White Sox (AL)	2

COOKIE LAVAGETTO, DODGERS

Game 4, 1947 World Series

Two-run walk-off double, ninth inning

At the time, some were calling it the greatest game in World Series history.

Yankees pitcher Bill Bevens carried a no-hitter and a one-run lead into the bottom of the ninth inning at Ebbets Field. A one-out walk and a stolen base placed the tying run on second. Bevens intentionally walked Pete Reiser with two outs to put the winning run on first. Lavagetto, who served in the military from 1942-45 and had played only 41 games in '47, crushed the second pitch from Bevens off the right-field wall for a pinch-hit double. Both runs scored. Both teammates and fans alike mobbed Lavagetto.

"Did ya hear what happened, honey?" Lavagetto said in front of reporters during a phone call to his wife, who was in Oakland after giving birth to their son. "And these darned Brooklyn fans have ripped my clothes to pieces. They've ruined my uniform."

The Yankees, however, won the series in seven games.

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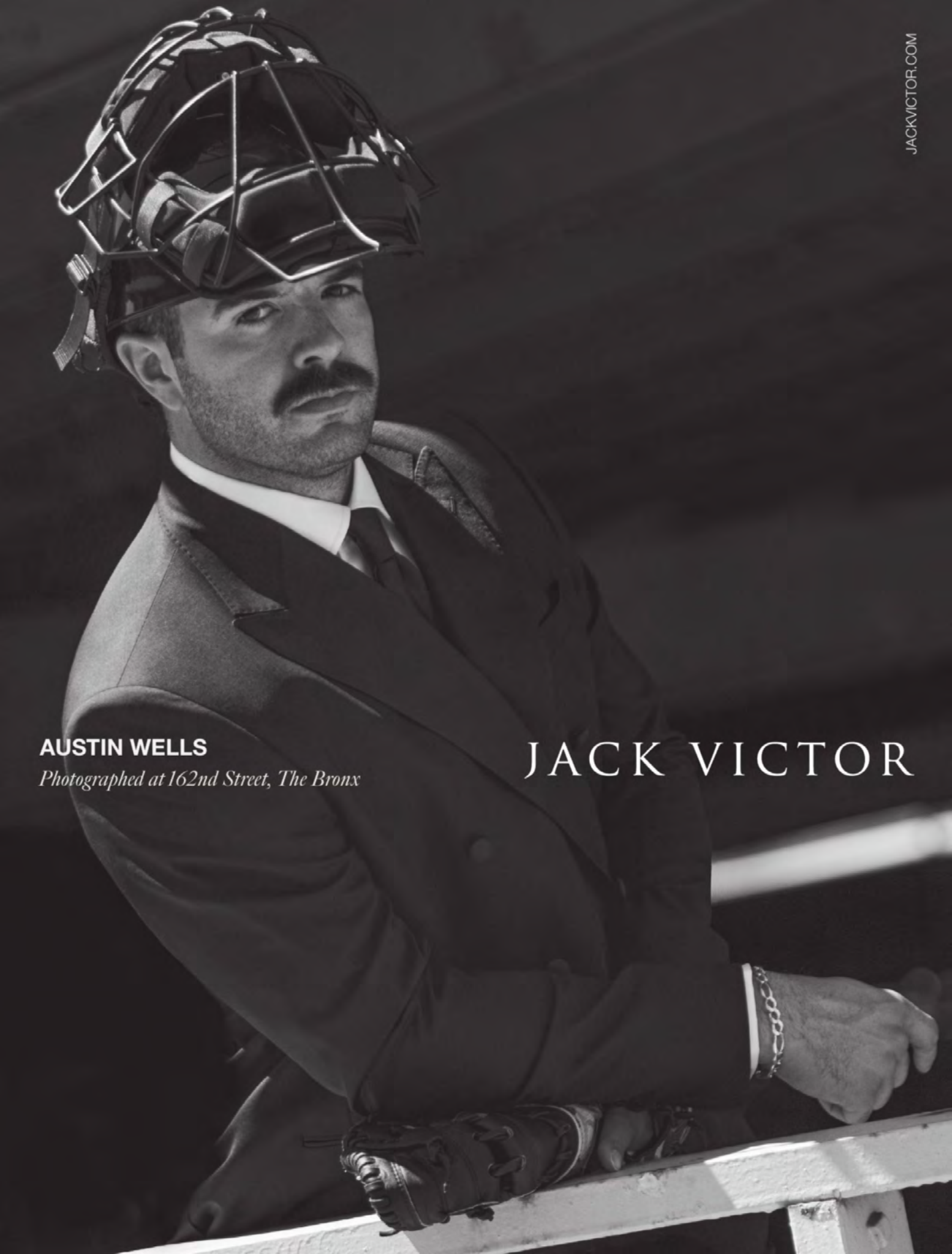
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JIM NORTHRUP, TIGERS

Game 7, 1968 World Series

Two-run triple, seventh inning

The Tigers had runners on first and second with two outs in the seventh inning of a scoreless tie when Northrup laced a two-run triple off Cardinals ace Bob Gibson at Busch Stadium.

"He's a fastball pitcher and I'm a fastball hitter," Northrup told reporters.

St. Louis center fielder Curt Flood might have caught the ball, but he got a bad read on it, then slipped as he corrected course. It was costly. Bill Freehan followed with a double to score Northrup to give Detroit a 3-0 lead. It was more than enough for Mickey Lolich, who allowed five hits and one run in a complete-game win.

"It was my fault," Flood said. "I just misjudged it. If I hadn't slipped, I think I would have caught it."

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

1960		**1976**	
Pittsburgh Pirates (NL)	4	Cincinnati Reds (NL)	4
New York Yankees (AL)	3	New York Yankees (AL)	0
1961		**1977**	
New York Yankees (AL)	4	New York Yankees (AL)	4
Cincinnati Reds (NL)	1	Los Angeles Dodgers (NL)	2
1962		**1978**	
New York Yankees (AL)	4	New York Yankees (AL)	4
San Francisco Giants (NL)	3	Los Angeles Dodgers (NL)	2
1963		**1979**	
Los Angeles Dodgers (NL)	4	Pittsburgh Pirates (NL)	4
New York Yankees (AL)	0	Baltimore Orioles (AL)	3
1964		**1980**	
St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	4	Philadelphia Phillies (NL)	4
New York Yankees (AL)	3	Kansas City Royals (AL)	2
1965		**1981**	
Los Angeles Dodgers (NL)	4	Los Angeles Dodgers (NL)	4
Minnesota Twins (AL)	3	New York Yankees (AL)	2
1966		**1982**	
Baltimore Orioles (AL)	4	St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	4
Los Angeles Dodgers (NL)	0	Milwaukee Brewers (AL)	3
1967		**1983**	
St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	4	Baltimore Orioles (AL)	4
Boston Red Sox (AL)	3	Philadelphia Phillies (NL)	1
1968		**1984**	
Detroit Tigers (AL)	4	Detroit Tigers (AL)	4
St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	3	San Diego Padres (NL)	1
1969		**1985**	
New York Mets (NL)	4	Kansas City Royals (AL)	4
Baltimore Orioles (AL)	1	St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	3
1970		**1986**	
Baltimore Orioles (AL)	4	New York Mets (NL)	4
Cincinnati Reds (NL)	1	Boston Red Sox (AL)	3
1971		**1987**	
Pittsburgh Pirates (NL)	4	Minnesota Twins (AL)	4
Baltimore Orioles (AL)	3	St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	3
1972		**1988**	
Oakland Athletics (AL)	4	Los Angeles Dodgers (NL)	4
Cincinnati Reds (NL)	3	Oakland Athletics (AL)	1
1973		**1989**	
Oakland Athletics (AL)	4	Oakland Athletics (AL)	4
New York Mets (NL)	3	San Francisco Giants (NL)	0
1974		**1990**	
Oakland Athletics (AL)	4	Cincinnati Reds (NL)	4
Los Angeles Dodgers (NL)	1	Oakland Athletics (AL)	0
1975		**1991**	
Cincinnati Reds (NL)	4	Minnesota Twins (AL)	4
Boston Red Sox (AL)	3	Atlanta Braves (NL)	3

1992		**2009**	
Toronto Blue Jays (AL)	4	New York Yankees (AL)	4
Atlanta Braves (NL)	2	Philadelphia Phillies (NL)	2
1993		**2010**	
Toronto Blue Jays (AL)	4	San Francisco Giants (NL)	4
Philadelphia Phillies (NL)	2	Texas Rangers (AL)	1
1995		**2011**	
Atlanta Braves (NL)	4	St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	4
Cleveland Indians (AL)	2	Texas Rangers (AL)	3
1996		**2012**	
New York Yankees (AL)	4	San Francisco Giants (NL)	4
Atlanta Braves (NL)	2	Detroit Tigers (AL)	0
1997		**2013**	
Florida Marlins (NL)	4	Boston Red Sox (AL)	4
Cleveland Indians (AL)	3	St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	2
1998		**2014**	
New York Yankees (AL)	4	San Francisco Giants (NL)	4
San Diego Padres (NL)	0	Kansas City Royals (AL)	3
1999		**2015**	
New York Yankees (AL)	4	Kansas City Royals (AL)	4
Atlanta Braves (NL)	0	New York Mets (NL)	1
2000		**2016**	
New York Yankees (AL)	4	Chicago Cubs (NL)	4
New York Mets (NL)	1	Cleveland Indians (AL)	3
2001		**2017**	
Arizona Diamondbacks (NL)	4	Houston Astros (AL)	4
New York Yankees (AL)	3	Los Angeles Dodgers (NL)	3
2002		**2018**	
Anaheim Angels (AL)	4	Boston Red Sox (AL)	4
San Francisco Giants (NL)	3	Los Angeles Dodgers (NL)	1
2003		**2019**	
Florida Marlins (NL)	4	Washington Nationals (NL)	4
New York Yankees (AL)	2	Houston Astros (AL)	3
2004		**2020**	
Boston Red Sox (AL)	4	Los Angeles Dodgers (NL)	4
St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	0	Tampa Bay Rays (AL)	2
2005		**2021**	
Chicago White Sox (AL)	4	Atlanta Braves (NL)	4
Houston Astros (NL)	0	Houston Astros (AL)	2
2006		**2022**	
St. Louis Cardinals (NL)	4	Houston Astros (AL)	4
Detroit Tigers (AL)	1	Philadelphia Phillies (NL)	2
2007		**2023**	
Boston Red Sox (AL)	4	Texas Rangers (AL)	4
Colorado Rockies (NL)	0	Arizona Diamondbacks (NL)	1
2008		**2024**	
Philadelphia Phillies (NL)	4	Los Angeles Dodgers (NL)	4
Tampa Bay Rays (AL)	1	New York Yankees (AL)	1

FREDDIE FREEMAN, DODGERS

2024 World Series Heroics

Freeman severely sprained his right ankle at the end of the 2024 regular season, but nothing could stop him in the World Series.

He made history in the 10th inning of Game 1 with the World Series' first walk-off grand slam. With the bases loaded and the Dodgers down to their final out, Freeman connected with a Nestor Cortes fastball and smacked it into Dodger Stadium's right-field pavilion seats, harkening back to that most pure and beautiful of baseball moments, when the Dodgers' Kirk Gibson pinch-hit on two injured legs against Hall of Fame closer Dennis Eckersley of the A's and willed a walk-off Game 1 homer in the 1988 World Series.

And then Freeman kept going. In only five games, Freeman drove in 12 runs to tie the World Series record set by the Yankees' Bobby Richardson in 1960 (in seven games). He swatted homers in each of the Fall Classic's first four games to join the Astros' George Springer (2017) as the only player to homer in four straight games within a single World Series. And in doing so, he extended his record-setting personal World Series homer streak to six, dating back to 2021. His final World Series slash line was a ridiculous .300/.364/1.000.

ROB TRINGALI/MLB PHOTOS

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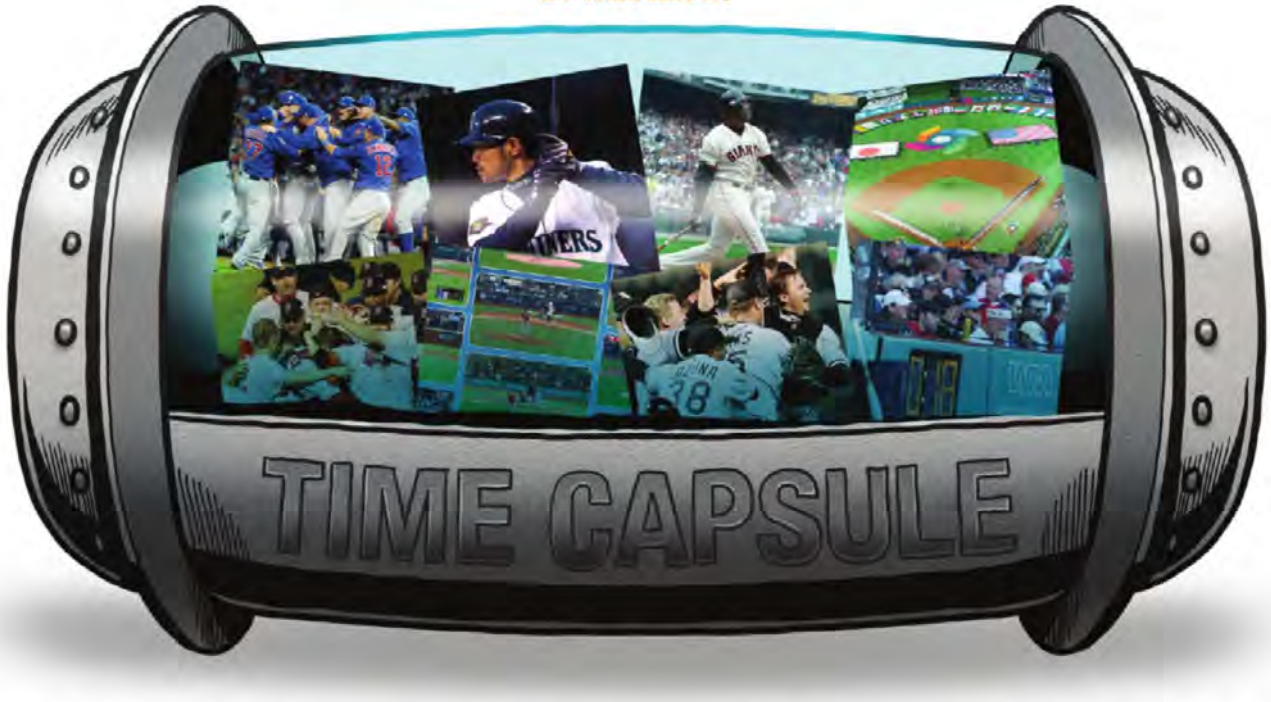
THE QUARTER-CENTURY MARK

As we celebrate the first 25 years of the century, it's hard to fathom how much has changed.

BY WILL LEITCH



AS SOMEONE WHO REMEMBERS living in the 1990s and being amazed when the calendar turned to the year 2000, it is truly remarkable that you are reading this in the year 2025. *2025!* We have been in this century for 25 years now! We're a quarter of the way through? (Actually, if you count 2000 as the first year of the new century, we're more than a quarter of the way through.) How did we get here so fast? We're going to blink and find ourselves in 2050.

There are few fields more connected to history, and the marking of the years that go by, than baseball. Sports provide a kind of framework for life, a way of marking time. If you were to pick a year in the past century or so and ask me to name something that happened then, my answer would almost certainly have to do with baseball. 1968? The year they raised the mound. 1927? The Ruth-Gehrig Yankees. 1961? The home run chase. 1998? The other home run chase. These individual years are inextricable from baseball itself; I remember big baseball events of those years more than I remember things from my life from those years.

And 25 years, even though it can go by fast, is a long, long time. Think about how much has happened in the world of baseball in this century alone, a century that's only, again, a quarter over. We have seen:

- *Barry Bonds hit 73 home runs.*
- *The Red Sox finally win the World Series. (And then do it again three more times.)*
- *The White Sox finally win the World Series.*
- *The Cubs finally win the World Series. The Cubs!*
- *Ichiro Suzuki debut, play his entire Hall of Fame career and usher in a whole generation of Asian players that have transformed the sport.*
- *Moneyball and the entire statistical and analytical revolution.*
- *The ability to watch every baseball game on your phone.*
- *The creation of the World Baseball Classic.*
- *The adoption of the designated hitter in the National League.*
- *A pitch clock! A second Wild Card spot! A runner on second base in extra innings!*

I mean, that is a lot of stuff! The world has always been full of change; we are always evolving. But look how much baseball has packed into these first 25 years. And I'm of course leaving out so much. I mean, on January 1, 2000, you had no idea who Albert Pujols was. It's fair to say that you do now!

It blows your mind how much baseball has packed into these first 25 years. It's staggering how much has happened. And that's the glory of all this. If I were to write this in the back of the program for the 2050 World Series, I'd be writing not just about events that haven't happened yet, but players we don't even know yet. Think about how exciting the last 25 years of baseball have been. Can you imagine what's going to happen in the next 25? I, for one, cannot wait to find out. ◆

Will Leitch is an author and contributor to MLB.com.

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